

Hafa Adai!

Senate Fiscal Affairs panel passes House's FY25 budget with amendments. **PAGE 2**
Danielle Coloma: From NMC graduate to accountant. **PAGE 3**

\$1

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PROSECUTION SAYS:

'Truth needed to be heard'

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**
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CORRESPONDENT

After over eight hours of deliberation, the jury involved in former court clerk William Abraczynski's trial reached a guilty verdict on all counts last Friday at the NMI Superior Court in Susupe.

» Abraczynski found guilty on all charges

The jury ruled in favor of the alleged victim, unanimously deciding "guilty" on the charges of sexual assault in the first degree, "guilty" for

See **TRUTH** on Page 4



CHRYSTAL MARINO

The prosecution team in the William Abraczynski trial made up of Chief Prosecutor Chester Hinds, left, and assistant attorney general Frances Demapan share comments after the jury's guilty verdict last Friday at the NMI Superior Court in Susupe.

\$139K in micro grants for gardeners, farmers, ranchers, non-profits

» Up to \$5K for individuals, up to \$10K for organizations

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
delatorreferdie@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Here's good news for home gardeners, farmers, and ranchers in the CNMI.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) disclosed in his *e-kilili* newsletter over the weekend that home gardeners, non-profits, and commercial growers will have access to micro-grants intended to increase food production in the Marianas again this year.

Sablan said the U.S. Congress authorized the program (up to

See **\$139K** on Page 4



Sablan



Talks for new PH honorary consul in CNMI underway

By **RACQUEL H. FLOYD**
raxfloyd@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Consul Ricardo Aragon of the Philippine Consulate General in Agaña, Guam said talks are underway for a

See **TALKS** on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Twelve Filipino-Americans who had their oath-taking for dual citizenship pose with Philippine Consul General in Agaña, Guam Consul Ricardo Aragon, seated third from left, after the mobile outreach mission last Saturday at Sun Palace Hotel in Susupe.

Muña speaks on current healthcare challenges with local journalists



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists held their monthly general membership meeting last week with a special appearance from Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. CEO Esther Muña, sixth from left, who touched on some of the recent headlines and news cycles about the CNMI's healthcare system.

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI chapter of the Society of

Professional Journalists held their monthly general membership meeting last week with a special

See **MUÑA** on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Kanto Diyes celebrated its one-year anniversary yesterday and what a journey it truly has been for contract worker-turned-small business owner Dante Suarez Conlu.

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WORLD

A narrow strip of scrubland and sand dunes on the Gaza side of the border with Egypt has emerged as a major obstacle in talks aimed at halting the Israel-Hamas war and freeing scores of hostages.

PAGE 10



LIFE & STYLE

From the moment he first appeared in public, snuggled in Princess Diana's arms outside the London hospital where he was born in 1984, Prince Harry was the ginger-haired scamp who stuck his tongue out at photographers.

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Local

Senate Fiscal Affairs panel passes House's FY25 budget with amendments

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The Senate Standing Fiscal Affairs Committee has passed the House of Representatives' version of the fiscal year 2025 budget with a few amendments.

Last Friday, the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee met to discuss House Bill 23-115, House Draft 1, House Schedule 1; essentially the House's

version of the FY25 budget proposed by the Office of the Governor last July.

The committee voted in favor of passing the House Bill with amendments to include two additional amendments specifically to reporting requirements.

According to Fiscal Affairs Committee chair Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-

Rota), the proposed amendments to the House Bill are to add additional sections requiring Department of Finance to report any additional revenue collected that is not detailed in the FY25 budget if it exceeds \$200,000; and to include language that penalizes government departments who don't comply with budget reporting re-

quirements.

"[The proposed amendments include] adding a section D that mentions that the secretary of Finance shall report any additional revenue in excess of \$200,000 that have been received that are not identified by this act. As for the penalties for failure to report, it is proposed by the committee that we include similar language to was indicated in Section 713 by taking

the same language and applying to 712 in terms of the violations of that section," said Manglona.

The committee unanimously voted in favor of passing the amendments and it will be presented before the full Senate body in a later session.

Sen. Corina Magofna (Ind-Saipan), the committee vice chair, was the one who made the recommendations to add these additional sections and languages.

Specifically, Magofna

raised concerns about the need to hold government heads accountable is they violate the reporting requirements.

"I do see Section 713 [of the bill] details violations of spending limits; however, I don't see anything that pertains to noncompliance of reporting requirements. Section 712 under reporting requirements, we don't have anything that holds people accountable for noncompliance of the reporting requirements. I just

See **SENATE** on Page 4



Magofna

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PUBLIC NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING


The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Airport Facilities Committee will hold a Special Committee Meeting on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in the CPA Meeting Room, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Saipan, CNMI. The following agenda will be considered, and public attendance is welcome.

AGENDA


- CALL TO ORDER
- ROLL CALL
- ADOPTION OF AGENDA
- PUBLIC COMMENTS
- SPECIAL MEETING ITEMS
 - Amelia Earhart Memorial – Memorandum of Agreement (draft)
 - Airport Equipment/Mechanical Operation and Maintenance Status Report
 - Car Rental Concession (draft)
 - Determination of Scope
 - Procurement Method
 - Evaluation Plan
 - Airport Facilities Committee Report – as of August 30, 2024
- EXECUTIVE SESSION
- MISCELLANEOUS / ANNOUNCEMENTS
- ADJOURNMENT

/s/_____
ANTONIO B. CABRERA
Chairman, Airport Facilities Committee

*All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items.
A time limit may be imposed. Video conferencing is also available via Zoom.
Zoom link: Meeting ID: 898 0318 0837 • Passcode: 573227



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD
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Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB), hereby gives notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on **Wednesday, September 18, 2024, at 8 a.m.** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Board of Professional Licensing Conference Room, BPL Building on Capitol Hill.

AGENDA

- Meeting Call to Order
- Determination of Quorum
- Review and Adoption of Agenda
- Review and Adoption of Minutes (**08/08/2024**)
- Public Comments
- Chairperson's Report
- Director's Report
- Investigator's Report
- Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
 - Governor's Office
 - Legislature
- Old Business
- New Business
 - Request for CEUs for post-doc courses to count towards CE credits for approval (Dr. George)**
- Pending Applications for Board's Review
 - Total Reviewed = _____ New Application = _____
 - Renewal = _____ Pending = _____
- Miscellaneous Business
- Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
- Announcements
 - Next Meeting Date
 - Adjournment of Meeting

Danielle Coloma: From NMC graduate to accountant



Triple J Five Star Saipan accountant Danielle Coloma is a proud graduate of Northern Marianas College.

After receiving her degree from Northern Marianas College, Danielle Coloma joined the long list of NMC alumni contributing to the CNMI's local workforce. Coloma is now a valued member of the Triple J family, serving as an Accountant for Triple J Five Star Saipan. In this role, she manages various responsibilities, including financial reporting, record keeping, and budgeting and forecasting, alongside other essential tasks such as document filing and processing payments.

When reflecting on her time

at NMC, Coloma sees her education as a crucial step in furthering her career in accounting. "NMC provided me with the necessary education needed for my current occupation due to the availability of the major," Coloma said. "I took accounting classes at NMC that I was able to implement in my occupation, and I'm sure what I've learned will continue to assist me in the future as well."

In addition to her education, she also highlights the extra-curricular activities she was

able to participate in, which enriched her college experience. "My favorite times at NMC would have to be the student activities held throughout the semester. I especially loved PROA Paint Night at the

See DANIELLE on Page 4

CCTV Installer and Repairer

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COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-24-025

S-11 & S-12 SEWER LIFT STATION RELOCATION

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the construction of the S-11 & S-12 Sewer Lift Station Relocation in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of the relocation of the existing S-11 & S-12 sewer lift station; relocation of wet well; relocation of valve and flow meter stations; installation of new pumps and accessories; and renovation of the existing generator building. The work shall be done in accordance with the project plans and specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in three hundred sixty-five (365) calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **September 9, 2024 at 10:00 AM (CHST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-24-025, S-11 & S-12 Sewer Lift Station Relocation"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on October 1, 2024**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time.

Bid shall be submitted on the provided bid forms. Bidders are required to complete all bid forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A bid guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 a.m. (CHST) on September 10, 2024 to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org, with a copy to Alley Reyes, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer, at email alley.reyes@cucgov.org, and Marcela Tenorio, CUC Administrative Technician Senior via email, marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and to waive any defects in said bid, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

KEVIN O. WATSON
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Richard C. Miller, FO458
BANES HOREY BERMAN & MILLER LLC
Macaranas Building, First Floor
4165 Beach Road, Garapan
P.O. Box 501969
Saipan, MP 96950
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Email: rMiller@pacifidlawyers.law

Attorneys for Petitioner/Plaintiff Joaquin C. Sablan

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

JOAQUIN CHISATO	CIVIL CASE NO.
SABLAN,	23-0203-CV
Petitioner/Plaintiff,	
vs.	SUMMONS
XIAO YAN CHEN	
INDALECIO, THOMAS	
HENRY ZHU INDALICIO,	
APRIL RITA ZHU	
INDALECIO, YVONNE	
ZHU INDALICIO,	
JASMINE ANA ZHU	
INDALECIO, EDWIN	
JOSEPH SABLAN	
INDALECIO, LUIS	
TAIMANAO INDALICIO,	
BRENDA ANN SABLAN	
INDALECIO, RITA	
INDALECIO REYES,	
FRANCES DANIELL	
FRANCES T. DANIEL	
TUDELA, AND DOES	
1-25, INCLUDING ALL	
PERSONS CLAIMING	
ANY RIGHT, TITLE, OR	
INTEREST IN LOT	
NO. 549-C,	
Respondents/ Defendants.]	

TO DEFENDANTS:

(1) APRIL RITA ZHU INDALICIO
(2) THOMAS HENRY ZHU INDALICIO
(3) YVONNE ZHU INDALICIO
(4) JASMINE ANA ZHU INDALICIO

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file with the Clerk of Court for the CNMI Superior Court any answer you wish to make to the Verified Petition to Quiet Title and Complaint in Ejectment and Trespass in the above-captioned case ("Verified Petition"), a copy of which is available from the Clerk of Court for the CNMI Superior Court. You may also receive a copy of Verified Petition by contacting Plaintiff's attorneys:

BANES HOREY BERMAN & MILLER, LLC
P.O. Box 501969
4165 Beach Road, First Floor, Macaranas Building, Garapan
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 789-8176
Email: cnmi@pacifidlawyers.law

Your answer is due within sixty (60) days of the first publication of this summons in a newspaper of general publication in the CNMI. If you fail to file an Answer in accordance with the Summons, judgment by default will be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Verified Petition.

Dated: this 22nd day of August, 2024.

/s/
Clerk of Court

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA)

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E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

PUBLIC NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Financial Affairs Committee will hold a Special Committee Meeting on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in the CPA Meeting Room, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Saipan, CNMI. The following agenda will be considered, and public attendance is welcome.

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

V. SPECIAL MEETING ITEMS

A. Supplemental Budget Requests:

- Port of Saipan Charlie Dock Extension Project - Architectural/Engineering Design & Planning Services
- Francisco M. Borja/Tinian International Airport - Purchase and installation of Air-conditioning Units
- Benjamin T. Manglona/Rota International Airport - Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA") Share for Project No. CPA-IFB-014-24 for the Repairs of Typhoon Marwar Damages
- Seaport Office Building Leak Repairs Construction Management Services
- Port of Saipan additional budget for Insurance Expenses
- Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport additional budget for Insurance Expenses / Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport additional budget for Utilities Expenses / Benjamin T. Manglona /Rota International Airport additional budget for Utilities Expenses

B. Financial Reports Seaport and Airport

C. Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Proposal

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

VII. MISCELLANEOUS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

/s/
DOLORES P. KIYOSHI
Chairwoman, Financial Affairs Committee

*All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. A time limit may be imposed. Video conferencing is also available via Zoom. Zoom link: Meeting ID: 898 0318 0837 • Passcode: 573227

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp Website: http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) NMHC IFB 2024-013

(This ad is paid by NMHC by HUD funds)

BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: September 30, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

Vehicle Lease of 3-Sport Utility Vehicles (SUV) for the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program in Saipan

Bid information and packet is available on September 04, 2024, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement Tab" or at the CDBG-DR website at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

Inquiries regarding this bid shall be submitted to Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net or facsimile at (670)234-9021, on or before September 10, 2024, no later than 10 a.m.

/s/ ZENIE P. MAFNAS
Corporate Director

/s/ MERCED "MARCIE" M. TOMOKANE
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

\$139K

From page 1

\$5,000 for individuals, up to \$10,000 for organizations) in the 2018 Farm Bill, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced on Friday the annual award of \$139,701 to the CNMI. The CNMI Division of Agriculture is applying for funds under the micro-grants for food security program and, if approved, will subgrant the funds, minus the 3% for administration purposes, to eligible farmers, ranchers, and other interested individuals to implement their projects consistent with the requirements of the program. The CNMI DOA's program aims to increase the quantity and quality of locally grown food through small-scale farming, herding, and livestock opera-

tions in communities to have significant levels of food insecurity and import a significant quantity of food. Sablan said over the last four years, the CNMI DOA has used the money to support over 40 small-scale farm and livestock operations with the goal of producing more food in the Marianas for good health and to protect against supply chain disruptions. The number of funded projects continuous to grow as more funds become available and more people become aware of the program to benefit the farmers and ranchers on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. DOA will be announcing the availability of the micro-grants and application requirements in local papers, on the radio, and at its website: <https://dlnr.cnmi.gov/agriculture.html>, and plans virtual workshops on

Zoom for anyone interested. The Guam Department of Agriculture was also awarded the same amount for its food security program to address food insecurity by enhancing the production and quality of locally grown food within Guam's communities. With Guam relying on imports for over 90% of its food consumption, GDA said this initiative aims to strengthen the local agricultural sector and improve access to nutritious, homegrown food. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture on the other hand, was awarded 2,235,219. HDOA will identify the eligible entities, defined as those entities that are physically located in the state of Hawaii, specifically on the islands of Hawaii, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, Oahu, and Kauai.

TALKS

From page 1

potential candidate for the position of honorary consul of the Philippines in the CNMI. The new honorary consul candidate he declined to name will replace Glicerio "Eli" Arago, who passed away in November 2021. "We've been looking for an honorary consul to take the place of the late Eli Arago. He's been a good friend to the Consulate of Guam. He's been a good friend to the Filipino community here. A very big help and it's very sad that he passed away a couple of years ago, but we've been trying to identify someone who's willing. We are talking to someone but there's no commitment... there are talks, there are points of clarifications," said Aragon during an interview during the PCG in Agana, Guam's mobile outreach mission at the Sun Palace Hotel in Susupe last Saturday.

Aragon said that becoming an honorary consul is not simple and requires background checks. He added that one must not just be willing to help, but should have commitment, resources since the position does not have a salary, and can muster community involvement. He also mentioned that they should be aware that they are representing the Philippine government and should prioritize the concerns of the Filipinos. "The nominee must be acceptable to both the Philippine and U.S. governments," added Aragon. The honorary consul does not have to be Filipino, according to Aragon. "Being a Philippine honorary consul who's representing the Philippine government doesn't have to be a Filipino. There's nothing that says that it's mandatory that he should be a Filipino. We have honorary consuls on other regions, in other jurisdictions who are not Filipinos. But here, we're all aware that that's the preference of the Filipinos."

Meanwhile, Aragon administered the oath-taking of 27 naturalized U.S. citizens who wanted to become dual citizens of the Philippines. The oath-taking ceremony was conducted in two sessions due to space limitations and weather conditions. There were 12 oath-takers present at 10am and 15 oath-takers were present at 2pm. Aragon mentioned that the largest group of Filipino migrants are in the United States, including Guam and the CNMI during his briefing about the rights and privileges in reacquiring Filipino citizenship. He explained that Filipinos who became U.S. or Canadian citizens automatically lost their Filipino citizenship and that the Philippine government implemented the Dual Citizenship Act in 2003 to allow former Filipinos to reacquire their citizenship.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

TRUTH

From page 1

assault and battery, and "guilty" on disturbing the peace. Shortly after the verdict, the alleged victim, who was present for the verdict, left the room in tears and seemingly relieved. Assistant attorney general Frances Demapan, who took the lead for the trial representing the government, said the prosecution was successful in what it sought out to do at the start of the 3 1/2-day trial. "We're so appreciative of the time and effort and diligence they (jury) took to really go through the evidence and consider all the testimony they heard. But it was a difficult case and we acknowledge that and we pressed forward because we believe that the truth needed to be heard. And regardless of the outcome whether it was guilty or not guilty the truth prevailed...the victim was able to say her story and she wasn't silenced in any way so we are elated and thankful for all the guilty verdict on all counts and we will continue to prosecute sexual assault cases, regardless of how difficult they are, regardless if they're reported late, or reported immediately," she said. Demapan added that all victims

deserve justice in some way or another despite the lapse of time and the Office of Attorney General won't stop in seeking justice for all of them. "It's a delayed reporting of sexual assault case. The challenge is there is little to no witnesses other than the victim. Usually, the sexual assault nurse examination cannot be done because how much time has elapsed since the incident. It's usually the victim's testimony itself and how much credibility the jury gives to that." When asked if she would recommend a victim gets checked immediately after an assault, Demapan answered. "I advise them to report when they're ready. Not right away. Not everyone is ready to report it right away, but report it when you're ready and when you feel comfortable and strong enough because the criminal justice system is a difficult road to go on. This case is over a year old and the victim was in this limbo state for a year and she continued to meet with us, she was diligent." Demapan also said no matter how painful, the victim went through trial preparation and the prosecution team is so thankful for that. "She testified for six hours total on the stand. That says a lot, no matter how painful and gut-wrenching and agonizing it was. She did it and

not all victims can do that but we do encourage victims to come forward with their truth when they are ready." When asked about the type of sentencing they are hoping for, Demapan said. "We haven't thought about that yet. We were so consumed with today's trial and just focusing on that. And now that we're getting to the sentencing part, we're going to examine the pre-sentence investigation report to see what comes out there. But we will seek somewhere close to the maximum sentence for sexual assault in the first degree, which is the highest tier of the sex offenses in the CNMI." She said the sentencing should take into account that Abraczinkas is not a CNMI permanent resident. "He came here on a one-year contract with the Judiciary but he's no longer employed, so he's unemployed, he doesn't have a permanent residence, he has no family members or other close ties to the community, and he turned over an expired passport to us. And because he's been convicted of a serious violent offense he should be remanded immediately until sentencing."

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

MUÑA

From page 1

appearance from Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.CEO Esther Muña who touched on some of the recent headlines and news cycles about CNMI's healthcare system. Last Friday, Muña joined members of the CNMI SPJ for their monthly general membership meeting where she discussed some of the current issues surrounding CHCC and the CNMI healthcare system. One of the biggest issues Muña discussed was the lack of funding for the Health Network Program (previously known as the Medical Referral Program). Muña shared that although CHCC is grateful for the recent \$380,000 appropriation from both Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and the Saipan and Northern Islands Delegation, it's only a drop in the bucket compared to the actual expenses of over \$3 million projected for the program. "The \$380,000 is a drop in the bucket of the \$3-million to \$6-million projected expenses annually. Our projections in the past year, based on subsistence allowance, lodging, transportation, we projected at least \$3 million to about \$6 million a year. Unfortunately, the government doesn't have the \$6 million to spare," she said.

Muña added that by law, CHCC—who oversees the HNP—cannot force the government to appropriate funding for the program which leaves them in the current dilemma where they are required to transport patients but have no funds to pay for it. "HNP is our responsibility by law, however, the HNP law did not actually identify a funding source for it. It specifically just says CHCC manages [the program] and there is a [specific] portion there in the law that says that we need to project the cost and every quarter. We send that letter to the Legislature when we ask for appropriation. [Currently] we are in a situation—which is also stated in the law—where we cannot force the government to obligate these funds. So here we are spending and yet there is no appropriation, and the law does not allow us to put that debt on the government," she said. "On the one hand, as a certified healthcare facility, CHCC has an obligation to transfer patients safely if they need medical attention off-island. We take that responsibility whether the government has money or not. It's our responsibility that the patient, if they need a high level of care, is transported before they are discharged," she added.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

SENATE

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feel like we can impose all these requirements but if there is no real consequences, what is point of even setting requirements if they are not to be enforced. We have all these requirements but no teeth. If it's not done, it's not done, and we continue

to move on and what's the point of that," she said. Magofna added that these reports are important for the Legislature to make sound decisions and for planning purposes. "I feel like what is the point of requiring these reports be submitted to the legislature if only some are submitted and not the rest? It's about taking responsibility," she said.

DANIELLE

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Colors Night Studio, and I've kept every single painting from that time to this day," Coloma said. Coloma was also a member of Phi Theta Kappa and Sigma Beta Delta, honor societies that recognize academic excellence in higher education. When discussing her motivation for pursuing her degree and current career path, she emphasized her support system and the affordability of the quality education offered at NMC. "My family and friends have always been my biggest support throughout my college years. They motivated me to push through the hardest days. Because of that, I chose NMC to be close to my support system, as well as the affordability of the college," Coloma said. Coloma's journey to her current position began at NMC, where she earned her AAS in Business Administration with an Accounting Emphasis in 2019 before graduating with her Bachelor of Science in Business Management with an Accounting Concentration in 2022. As she transitioned into the workforce following her graduation, Coloma described working alongside experienced professionals as the most rewarding aspect of

her job as an accountant. "The most rewarding aspect has been working with others in the same field and learning from their years of experience. I'm constantly amazed by the knowledge of my coworkers. I have to remind myself that everyone has a starting point, and it's through hard work and continued growth that they were able to reach their current positions," Coloma said. Coloma also shared a message with other students who are currently pursuing higher education. "Be willing to learn. If you don't have the motivation to gain the knowledge needed for this career, it will be difficult in the long run. If you open your mind to the numbers and processes, it will eventually flow through you with ease," Coloma said. She added, "Don't be afraid to ask questions. You're in college to learn and pursue a career in that field. Without asking questions, you're closing off a good opportunity for growth. Ask your instructors, friends, or family in the same or similar field to explain in further detail if you require a better understanding of the topic." "It's never too late to start pursuing higher education. Life is about learning and the knowledge we pass down to future generations. It's not going to be an easy path, but no matter what, never back down and never give up." (PR)

Supreme Court issues updated Drug Court Policies and Procedures

On Thursday, Sept. 12, 2024, the Supreme Court approved updates to the Drug Court's Policies and Procedures. The P&P guides Drug Court staff in their efforts to navigate participants through substance use disorder treatment. First issued on Dec. 15, 2016, the P&P was amended in May 2017, April 2020, and February 2023. Drug Court periodically updates its P&P to reflect national Best Practice Standards, considerations of current practice, and the unique geography of the Commonwealth as the Drug Court Program continues to evolve.

"The Supreme Court's ap-

proval of these updates reflects our ongoing commitment to ensuring that Drug Court operates with the highest standards of fairness, accountability, and support for those facing substance use disorder. By refining these policies, we are strengthening the court's ability to adapt to the unique needs of our community and its participants, while holding true to the principles of justice and rehabilitation," said Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro.

This newest amendment, effective Sept. 12, 2024, resulted from a collaboration between key Drug Court stakeholders. Meetings to amend

the P&P included Drug Court Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio, Drug Court staff, Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Public Defender, Department of Corrections, Department of Public Safety, and Community Guidance Center. The Drug Court team incorporated improvements in language, consistency, reflection of current practice, and compliance with national Best Practice Standards. Major amendments include:

1. Added ability for potential participants to waive the presence of their attorney during initial intake and screening;

2. Increase to the criminal res-

titution limit for Drug Court eligibility from \$3,000 to \$5,000 and removal of the exception for restitution owed to insurance companies, businesses, or other corporate entities;

3. An added provision that holds participants liable to pay for the costs of contesting a positive drug test if they later admit to the use for which the test was contested;

4. Added ability for the Office of the Attorney General to move Drug Court to initiate termination proceedings; and

5. Allowing participants facing a termination hearing to choose between a Drug Court-appointed defense counsel and their original criminal defense counsel.

These changes refine Drug Court's intake procedures and allow participants more flexibility in their choice of legal representation. They will aid

the Drug Court Program in its mission to improve the lives of individuals struggling with substance use disorders. Drug Court is a multidisciplinary collaboration using evidence-based and culturally sensitive treatment services to promote sobriety and community wellness in the Commonwealth. Updating the P&P allows Drug Court to accomplish this mission in the face of an ever-changing substance abuse treatment landscape. **(PR)**

MHS' Aniciete, Son named '25 National Merit Scholarship Program semifinalists

Marianas High School students Jedric Aniciete and Gwanpil Son have been named semifinalists of the National Merit Scholarship Corp.

They are among the more 16,000 semifinalists in the 70th Annual National Merit Scholarship Program. These academically talented high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 6,870 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$26 million that will be offered next spring. To be considered for a Merit Scholarship award, semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the finalist level of the competition.

About 95% of the semifinalists are expected to attain finalist standing, and approximately half of the finalists will win a National Merit Scholarship, earning the Merit Scholar title.

NMSC, a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance, was established in 1955 specifically to conduct the annual National Merit Scholarship Program.

Scholarships are underwritten by NMSC with its own funds and by approximately 280 business organizations, higher education institutions, and individual donors that share NMSC's goals of honoring the nation's scholastic champions and encouraging the pursuit of academic excellence.

Over 1.3 million juniors in about 21,000 high schools entered the 2025 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2023 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of semifinalists, representing less than 1% of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state. The number of semifinalists in a state is proportional to the state's per-

centage of the national total of graduating seniors.

To become a finalist, semifinalists and a high school official must submit a detailed scholarship application, in which they provide information about the semifinalists' academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, employment, and honors and awards received. A semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, write an essay, and earn SAT or ACT scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test.

From over 16,000 semifinalists, more than 15,000 are expected to advance to the finalist level, and in February they will be notified of this designation. All National Merit Scholarship winners will be selected from this group of Finalists. Merit Scholar designees are selected on the basis of their skills, accomplishments, and potential for success in rigorous college studies, without regard to gender, race, ethnic origin, or religious preference.

National Merit Scholarships

Three types of National Merit Scholarships will be offered in the spring of 2025. Every finalist will compete for one of 2,500 National Merit \$2500 Scholarships that will be awarded on a state-representational basis. About 770 corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards will be provided by approximately 130 corporations and business organizations for Finalists who meet their specified criteria, such as children of the grantor's employees or residents of communities where sponsor plants or offices are located. In addition, about 150 colleges and universities

are expected to finance some 3,600 college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards for finalists who will attend the sponsor institution.

National Merit Scholarship winners of 2025 will be announced in four nationwide news releases beginning in April and concluding in July. These scholarship recipients will join more than 382,000 other distinguished young people who have earned the Merit Scholar title. **(PR)**

CEDA announces BOG as key partner in \$57M SSBCI 2.0 program

The Commonwealth Economic Development Authority is excited to announce that Bank of Guam will serve as a vital partner in the \$57 million CNMI State Small Business Credit Initiative 2.0 program with funding from the U.S. Treasury. This program is designed to provide much-needed financial support to small businesses throughout the CNMI.

Bank of Guam, the only participating FDIC bank in the prior SSBCI 1.0, has once again stepped forward to support CNMI's small businesses. Their continued partnership underscores their commitment to fostering economic development and entrepreneurship in the region.

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang assigned CEDA the re-

sponsibility of applying for and managing the SSBCI 2.0 bank-driven program. With three tranches of funding, the first amounting to nearly \$19 million, the program requires that 80% of the initial tranche be disbursed before additional funds are released.

"We are thrilled to partner once again with Bank of Guam, whose commitment to CNMI's economic growth has been instrumental in past initiatives," said CEDA chair Frank M. Rabauliman.

"Bank of Guam's role in this program is pivotal," said CEDA Development Corporation Division chair Frank Lee Borja. "Their leadership and experience in the SSBCI 1.0 program ensure that we are well-positioned to provide comprehensive financial support to CNMI's small busi-

nesses."

The SSBCI 2.0 loan guarantee program will guarantee up to 80% of the principal loan amount, while the loan participation program will cover up to 60% of the principal loan, and the collateral support program will cover up to 50% of the principal loan amount, giving businesses the financial leverage they need to succeed.

More details will be released as they become available.

For more information, contact the CEDA loan team at (670) 234-6245 ext. 305/307/309 or by email at:

■ Fred Cruz – f.cruz@developcnmi.com

■ Abby Atalig – a.atalig@developcnmi.com

■ Marie Coleman – m.coleman@developcnmi.com. **(PR)**

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Hide your pets! Trump's crazy talk should be a bigger issue than it is

It was Hillary Clinton who observed of her 2016 presidential campaign rival: "A man you can bait with a tweet is not a man we can trust with nuclear weapons."

All indications from Tuesday evening's presidential debate are that Donald Trump today is easier to bait than ever. Moreover, his lifelong habit of publicly describing (and apparently believing) scenarios that are not merely false but objectively deranged seems to have worsened.

We'll spare readers the tired game of "who won" the debate. Suffice to say, most mainstream analyses appear to agree that Kamala Harris' poised performance—dodgy and devoid of details though it often was—probably did what she needed it to do in terms of presenting her as a credible candidate to a nation that still doesn't know her that well.

But let's talk about the candidate we all know very well.

If there's one issue that came out clearly in Tuesday's event, it's that Trump's escalating embrace of dystopian fantasies and bizarre conspiracy theories should in itself be disqualifying for high office.

And the fact that we're all somewhat used to it these days doesn't make it less dangerous. In fact, it makes it more so.

We offer a thought exercise. Consider the fallout if Harris—or Clinton, or Barack Obama, or Mitt Romney, or any other national figure of any party—had ever stood on a presidential debate stage and said anything like this:

■ "They're eating the dogs! The [migrants] that came in—they're eating the cats! ... People on television say, 'My dog was taken and used for food!'"

■ "[E]xecution after birth, it's execution, no longer abortion, because the baby is born ... [They] put the baby aside and then we determine what we want to do with the baby."

■ "[A] lot of these illegal immigrants coming in, they're trying to get them to vote. They can't even speak English. They don't even know what country they're in practically. And these people are trying to get them to vote. And that's why they're allowing them to come into our country."

■ "Viktor Orban, one of the most respected men—they call him a strong man. He's a tough person. Smart. Prime Minister of Hungary. ... He said the most respected, most feared person is Donald Trump."

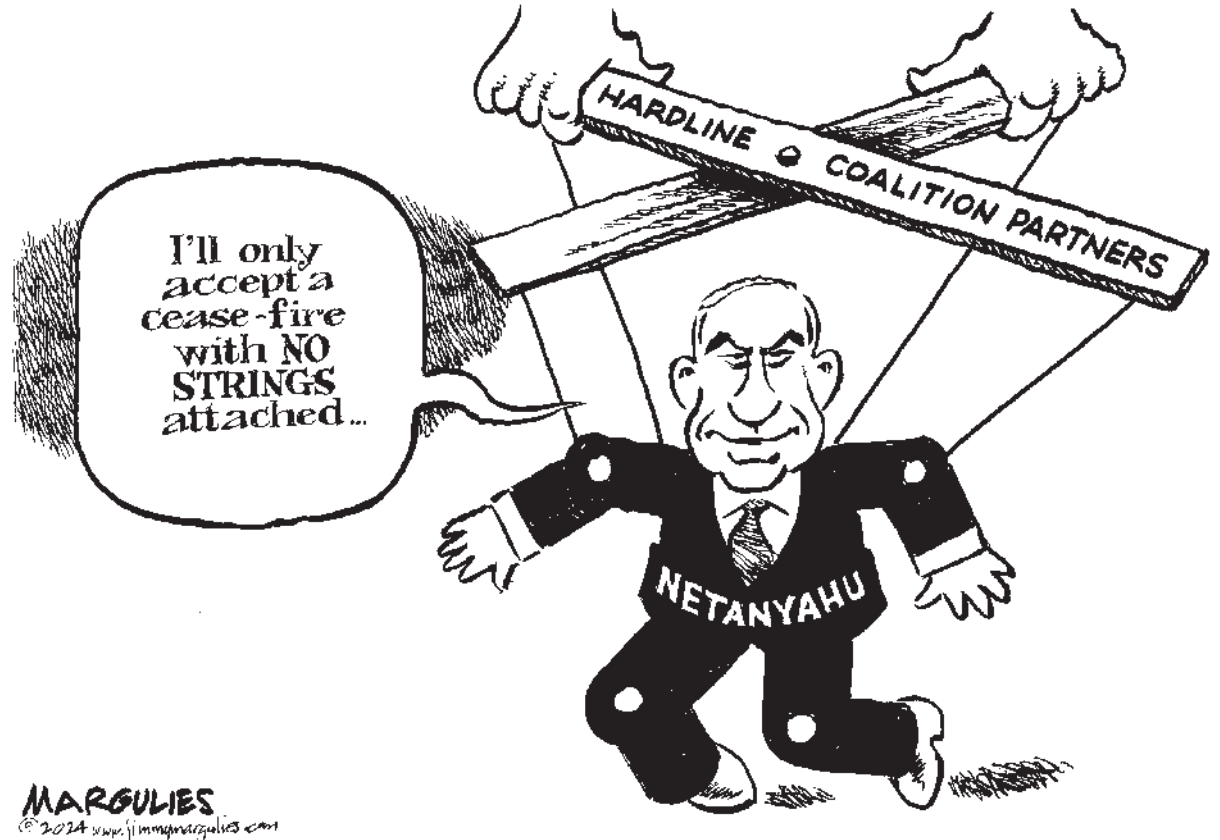
Needless to say, migrants aren't eating house pets, doctors aren't engaging in post-birth executions, illegal immigrants aren't being shipped in to vote. And Orban is a vicious dictator whose endorsement no rational leader should want.

There's so much more: Trump claimed in the debate that crime is rising (it's falling); that he had record-high economic growth while President Joe Biden had record-high inflation (both false); that 21 million illegal immigrants have arrived monthly under Biden (it's actually less than half that many total, over Biden's entire three-plus years in office, says U.S. Border Control); that foreign countries are opening their jails and sending criminals here (an utter fabrication).

And on. And on. And on.

How did rhetoric indicating not just dishonesty but a psychological break with reality get to be so normal in presidential politics that most people are dissecting this debate as if it

See **HIDE** on Page 7



Are tensions in the South China Sea at risk of explosion?

While the world's attention largely remains fixated on the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, U.S. officials across the national security apparatus also have another part of the globe on their minds: the South China Sea. This vast expanse of islands, reefs, rocks and atolls is the site of contested claims among multiple Asian countries, and its maritime boundaries are about as clear as an inkblot. China, Asia's paramount great power, has claimed about 90% of the waters for itself, and it is using its large coast to press those claims more aggressively.

Typically, China's smaller Asian neighbors choose to register their disapproval in public statements and work to brush the long-running disputes under the rug. The last thing Vietnam, Indonesia, Brunei and Malaysia want is a dog fight with a superior military adversary—better to settle the differences or mitigate the fallout to ensure the parties don't stumble into a conflict.

The Philippines, however, has taken a more brash approach. Instead of de-facto permitting China to run roughshod over the seas, Manila under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is in essence giving Beijing the middle finger by sailing throughout its own exclusive economic zone, waters that extend 200 nautical miles from its shoreline. In terms of international law, this is a legitimate response. But in terms of managing the South China Sea dispute with China as peacefully as possible, the Philippines' policy runs the risk of forcing Beijing to respond even more impetuously, potentially causing repeated clashes to mushroom into a conflict nobody wants.

Such a contingency would have extreme consequences for the United States, which is a treaty ally of the Philippines and has made clear that any attacks against Philippine armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the South China Sea would compel Washington and Manila to invoke Article 4 of the Mutual Defense Treaty. That clause, while a bit ambiguous, leaves open the option of the U.S. taking military action to come to Manila's defense. Needless to say, a scenario in which the world's two largest economic powers—the U.S. and China account for 42% of the globe's gross domestic product—are shooting at each other over a bunch of uninhabited reefs is equally parts calamitous and absurd.

Fortunately, we aren't at that point. Yet the fact that China and the Philippines continue to get into dog fights within Manila's territorial waters isn't encouraging. This summer has seen a series of confrontations between the two Asian powers near the Second Thomas and Sabina shoals. The most violent happened June 17, when Chinese coast guard vessels blocked a Philippine mission to send humanitarian supplies to its troops stationed at the Second Thomas Shoal. That incident involved blocking maneuvers that impeded the supply mission, with Chinese coast guard personnel brandishing sharp objects to pop the rubber boats used by the Philippines. One Filipino sailor lost a thumb,

By **DANIEL DEPETRIS**

Chicago Tribune

Daniel DePetris is a fellow at Defense Priorities and a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune.



and the Chinese boarded the boats to confiscate the weapons onboard. The encounter caused an international uproar and led to a deal between Beijing and Manila to defuse tensions around the shoal without compromising on their core positions.

Regrettably, that agreement (which hasn't been published) hasn't done anything to address the confrontations near the Sabina Shoal, which is roughly 75 miles from the Philippines' Palawan province. At issue is the presence of the BRP Teresa Magbanua, one of Manila's largest ships, near the shoal, which China claims as its own. The Chinese are concerned that the Philippines is scheming to keep the large vessel in the area permanently to stake Manila's control over the area and has responded by doing everything possible to make resupply missions to the ship as difficult for Manila as possible. On Aug. 19, two Philippine coast guard cutters sustained damage after Chinese vessels purposely collided into them. Six days later, another Philippine boat was intercepted by the Chinese. A similar event happened Aug. 31.

It's easy to get caught up in all the dizzying back-and-forth. But the standoff between Manila and Beijing comes down to two stubborn states—one, a U.S. ally, and the other, a power that wants to parlay its wealth and growing military power into broader influence in its neighborhood—that are unwilling to cave to each other. The Philippines has international law on its side, but international law will get it only so far when an opponent has significant ambition and larger forces at its disposal. Hard power is still the core determining factor in how international relations shake out.

Whether any long-term solution can be hashed out will be determined by these two parties. As the Philippines' main ally, the U.S. will be tempted to step into the muck in Manila's favor. Adm. Samuel Paparo, the combatant commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, has even suggested that the Navy could escort Philippine ships to the shoals in order to ensure that sailors stationed in those areas get the supplies they need. This, however, is likely to be viewed by China as highly provocative at best and an attempt by Washington to further encircle Beijing at worst.

Regardless of what the U.S. decides to do, one question should take precedence above all others: Is a bunch of rocks worth the prospect of a conflict with China? The answer is unquestionably "no."

Lawmakers must take action to protect children from firearms violence

Earlier this month, four people were shot to death on a train in Chicago. Two days later, four people were shot to death at a school in Georgia. No one is safe. It can happen when people are at their most vulnerable: The victims in Chicago were shot as they slept. They can be shot where they are supposed to be safe: The victims in Georgia were shot at school.

In remarks in June, the United States surgeon general declared firearm violence a public health crisis. It is the leading cause of death in children in our country. I am not just devastated by the loss of life this month: I am angry that we continue to permit this. Have we done all that we can? I hear this plea repeatedly as a pediatrician when a child is sick or dying. When we hear calls for thoughts and prayers, they are sincere and heartfelt. The country is in agony. But they are not enough; they will never be enough.

For every child who dies from a bullet, there are at least four others who are injured. Those children might never walk, talk, eat or even breathe on their own again. If they manage to survive, they might suffer from mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Even children who are not injured directly by guns feel the effect of it. This violence is so pervasive that our children grow up surrounded by trauma and pain, drowning in toxic stress caused by the sounds of gunshots and the thoughts of active shooter drills. This constant exposure to violence can literally change the brain chemistry of children and can expose them to lifelong risks of mental health problems, addiction, obesity and heart problems.

Voting is a small act that can make an enormous difference.

As a physician, I help my patients and their families register to vote. As a citizen, I am serving as an election judge. It is my responsibility to keep children safe and to advocate for them, and that includes utilizing the power of the vote. The intersection between health and voting is strong.

When you cast your ballot for the 2024 election, please consider how your vote directly affects children. We must elect leaders at all levels of government who prioritize children's health and pass policies that will allow every child to reach their full potential. The 14-year-old shooter in Georgia is reported to have used an AR platform styled assault weapon. The United States had an assault weapons ban from 1994-2004, and during that time, deaths from mass shootings decreased by 70%. Legislators have the power to pass a federal assault weapons ban again, and research shows that 60-70% of Americans favor this.

About 76% of youth school shooters get their firearms from home, thus secure storage is vital to preventing school shootings. And secure storage, where firearms are locked and ammunition is locked and stored separately, also reduces accidental shootings and deaths from suicide. Strong laws on the state level help save lives. I live in a state that has some of the strongest firearm injury prevention laws in the country, but it is not enough. Illinois is surrounded by other states that have weak laws, and death and violence bleed across state lines.

We need legislators who will enact strong laws on all levels: local, state and federal laws.

Most gun owners are responsible, reasonable citizens who want to keep their children safe. Most Americans support com-

By DEANNA BEHRENS, MD, FAAP

Tribune News Service

Deanna Behrens, MD, FAAP, is chair of the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Firearms Violence Prevention Committee



mon-sense laws related to gun violence prevention, including safe storage and limitations in assault weapons. Why don't more elected officials?

Until we vote for legislators who will vote for kids, children will continue to suffer. Every three days, guns kill enough kids to fill an entire school bus. Children cannot vote, but their parents, their loved ones and their communities can. I can and will vote for them and work with any candidate from any party who will fight for children. After the unbearable tragedy at Uvalde, Texas, in June 2022, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act was signed into law. This extraordinary law was the first piece of federal legislation on firearms in two decades, and it proves that legislators can come together to prioritize the needs of all citizens.

Together with our elected officials, we will not let firearm violence rob our kids of their childhood and their futures, of their mental health, of their neighbors and their families. Please join me in voting for kids.

Trump says he doesn't care about race, but he keeps talking about it

Much of Tuesday's presidential debate between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump proved to be well-trodden ground. The sound bites and talking points, at times rambling and incoherent (Trump) or rational yet repetitive (Harris), were largely what we have heard before.

But when David Muir, one of the two ABC News anchors moderating the debate, asked Trump about his comments related to Harris' racial identity, it felt somewhat illuminating.

Citing Trump's quote from July, "I didn't know she was Black until a number of years ago when she happened to turn Black and now she wants to be known as Black," Muir asked the former president why he believed it was appropriate to weigh in on the racial identity of his opponent.

"I don't and I don't care. I don't care what she is. I don't care," Trump said.

He suggested that Muir or some Americans were making a big deal out of something that he "couldn't care less" about. With that response, Trump both condemned his own actions and diminished the importance of his words.

It reminded me of childhood arguments when a bully's verbal put-downs backfire and the only clapback he or she can come up with is: "I don't care."

But Trump does care about race, at least when it creates a perceived advantage for him.

If he didn't care, he wouldn't have issued an executive order in 2020 that banned federal entities and contractors from providing employee training on so-called divisive concepts and harmful ideologies related to race and gender.

As Harris stated in her response, Trump's focus on race has been a fixture of his career.

It was there in the late 1960s when Trump began working for his father's real estate company, which would later be investigated for racial bias by the U.S. Department of Justice.

It was there in 1989, when Trump took out advertisements in

four New York City newspapers calling for the execution the Central Park 5, the group of Black and Latino boys who were wrongfully accused of rape.

It was there in the years 2011 through 2014 when Trump continued to falsely insist that President Barack Obama was not a U.S. citizen.

Harris outlined a timeline in which Trump has drawn on race and racial stereotypes to influence and manipulate the American people.

If that's not enough, PBS painstakingly documented what Trump has said about race from 1973 through 2020. Sometimes his record is conflicting, but any contradictions that might seem to reflect evolved thinking about race generally resulted in some type of personal gain.

It's easy to get caught up in the minutiae of race and politics—these are ties that run deep in America. But what Trump showed in Tuesday's debate is the bigger picture: a persistent and deeply entrenched view of race in this country that is stuck on stupid.

We need to talk about race but we need to talk about it in ways that are productive toward bringing much needed change: addressing systemic racism, the legacy of slavery, racial and gender discrimination, economic and racial segregation.

That's not the same as promoting racial stereotypes or questioning someone's biracial identity.

It is a long-standing tradition in American politics to demonize one group of people in order to retain power. It is a standard play in the political playbook to appeal to the "common man" while offering up marginalized people—in this case, immigrants, people of color, people with disabilities and women—for ridicule or branding as the evil element destroying the country.

Trump's rebuttal, that Harris had to reach "many, many years" into history to find evidence of his racial recklessness, only served to underscore Harris' point that it has been there all along.

Trump claimed there is nothing to see there now, but in the span of the two-hour debate he repeated baseless claims that

history of politics."

This is the man we want negotiating with crafty foreign leaders in a dangerous world?

Harris' team should be careful about overconfidence. Her generally well-received debate performance was helped immeasurably by her unhinged opponent. Her smiling, optimistic demeanor was a welcome antidote to Trump's glowering menace.

But she still owes America more substance about her plans. If she doesn't follow up the debate with some serious interviews and/or press conferences, she does a disservice to both her campaign and her country.

Still, no one should lose sight of the real story today: Donald Trump's well-established mental and emotional instability is getting worse. As unfit as he was for office the first time around, he's more so now.

The man we all saw on the stage in Philadelphia on Tuesday should not be in charge of house pets—let alone nuclear weapons.

By NEDRA RHONE

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution



Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio are eating cats and dogs, "the pets of the people that live there," he said.

Muir quickly debunked this lie but once again Trump had tossed out a comment that marked Black and brown people as savage and inhuman.

Trump says he doesn't care about race, but it would seem he cares very much.

If he didn't, he wouldn't keep talking about it in all the wrong ways.

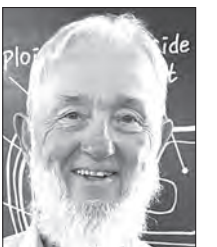
Between the immensities

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey Connolly aka "Pepe Batbon" is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is the Poet Laureate of Tinian and enjoys stargazing.



**A heaven full of hell
A hell full of heaven**

You did a hell of a job with all your homework you must be in heaven with your high paying job what the hell was wrong with your pickup today you said its a heavenly dream machine yesterday who the hell is playing that heavy rock guitar solo it sounds like old riffs from Stairway To Heaven Heavens to Murgatroyd it's a brand new android ignorance of camera use is making me paranoid.

An unholy hellhold of problems is all over earth a resolution solution is common sense and mirth that was a hell of a TV debate the other night a convicted felon gave dog and cat owners a fright Robert Johnson sang 'there's a hellhound on my trail' POTUS 45's campaign is beginning to fall and fail.

HIDE

From page 6






was about policy and not mental stability? It's a question that the media and the public should be pondering deeply.

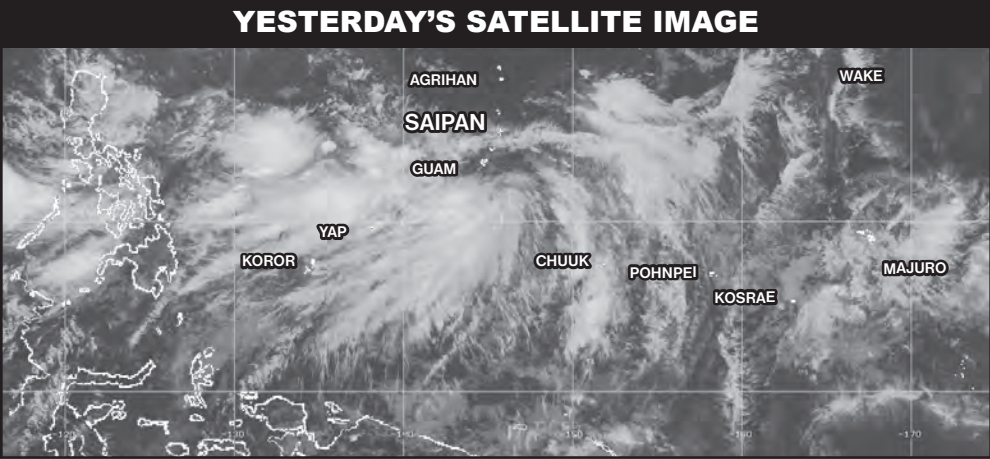
Harris earned some criticism of her own during the debate—for glossing over details of her policy plans with glittering generalities, for pivoting away from hard questions about her altered positions—but all of it was within the range of normal politics. If she suggested at any point that scary brown people from distant lands are coming for Fido, we missed it.

And even on an issue where Harris is legitimately vulnerable—immigration—Trump was unable to set aside his epic ego long enough to capitalize on that weakness.

At one point, Harris needled Trump about the size of his campaign rallies, in the most obvious bait-setting imaginable. Trump, when subsequently offered a teed-up chance to get into immigration, veered off course with: "First let me respond as to the rallies ... the biggest rallies, the most incredible rallies in the

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
									
Breezy. Cloudy with widespread locally heavy showers and isolated thunderstorms. South winds 20 to 25 mph with gusts to 35 mph possible near showers.		Cloudy with showers likely and a slight chance of thunderstorms. Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph.		Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers.		Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.		Mostly cloudy with a 40 percent chance of showers.	
85°	76°	85°	76°	85°	76°	85°	76°	85°	76°



PICTURE TIME: 12:04 AM THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2024
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A Flood Watch, and a High Surf Advisory remain in effect for the Marianas. In addition, a Small Craft Advisory is still expected to be in effect starting tonight, as winds and seas pick up. The weather forecast remains largely unchanged, with only minor tweaks made overnight. The region will continue to experience a wet and gustier monsoon regime, with windy conditions likely by early Monday morning. More details regarding development of Invest 97W will be provided in a followup AFD later this afternoon. At this time, the swell is expected to remain mainly southwest, with a strong burst in wind waves possible near more intense winds the next few days. Seas will start to approach 10 feet tonight, increasing further to around 12-13 feet as winds pick up. 97W still remains largely disorganized, with a centroid in the general vicinity outside of Guam’s western coastal waters.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: <https://www.weather.gov/gum/>

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	85° / 77°	
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	85° / 80°	
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	84° / 80°	
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Cloudy	87° / 76°	
Kosrae	Cloudy	87° / 76°	
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 81°	
DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET	
Today	6:05 AM	6:17 PM	
Tuesday	6:05 AM	6:16 PM	
Wednesday	6:05 AM	6:16 PM	
Thursday	6:05 AM	6:15 PM	
Friday	6:05 AM	6:14 PM	
DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	3:50 AM	4:58 PM
Tuesday	-	4:52 AM	5:43 PM
Wednesday	-	5:53 AM	6:26 PM
Thursday	-	6:53 AM	7:09 PM
Friday	-	7:53 AM	7:54 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	61° / 52°	
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	88° / 68°	
Hong Kong	Thunderstorm	86° / 79°	
Honolulu	Rain	83° / 76°	
London	Showers	59° / 46°	
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	80° / 65°	
Manila	Thunderstorm	88° / 79°	
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	64° / 48°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	89° / 80°	
New York	Showers	81° / 73°	
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	84° / 72°	
Paris	Sunny	72° / 52°	
Busan	Partly Cloudy	77° / 72°	
Rome	Mostly Sunny	90° / 66°	
Salem	Thunderstorm	88° / 72°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	60° / 52°	
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	84° / 64°	
Tokyo	Rain	73° / 66°	
Washington, DC	Thunderstorm	85° / 74°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
12:01 AM	Low Tide	1.18	
5:05 AM	High Tide	1.91	
12:12 PM	Low Tide	-0.15	
7:05 PM	High Tide	2.00	

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235.3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2024							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	11:50AM	2:25PM	1, 3, 5	UA825	5:30PM	10:00PM	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA184	10:25PM	4:15AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA192	10:25PM	6:15AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:20PM	9:10PM	Daily	PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
				UA184	11:50PM	5:40AM+1	2, 5
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam	UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM +1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
				UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM +1	2, 5 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Sep 2-8	7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	1, 6, 7 Sep 9-15	7C3472	11:00AM	4:40PM	Sep 15-18
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily Sep 16-22	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	7 Sep 1
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	1, 7 Sep 23-29	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 7 Sep 2-8
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	1, 5, 6, 7 Sep 9-15
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily Sep 16-22
7C3471	5:50PM	9:30PM	Sep 15-18	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	1, 7 Sep 23-29
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
HX77	3:05AM	6:00AM	1, 5	HX76	6:25PM	1:35AM+1	4, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.					
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024					
SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Kanto Diyes turn uno; eyes breakfast fare

By MARK RABAGO

mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Kanto Diyes celebrated its one-year anniversary yesterday and what a journey it truly has been for contract worker-turned-small business owner Dante Suarez Conlu.

"We started out as a barbecue stall selling chicken inasal essentially for takeout. Half of my life I've been working in F&B and it never crossed my mind to start a business. It's actually a blessing that this happened," he said.

The 51-year-old Bacolod City, Negros Occidental native said it was actually his wife, Lot, who is the brains behind the operation.

"She was the one who had the drive to open this. She was actually the right hand of her mom in their karinderya business back in Cebu and she always wanted to open her own restaurant. As recently as five years ago, she pushed me to start Kanto Diyes because she thought we basically were running things at the Korean restaurant we used to work for," he said.

As for serving their now iconic chicken inasal and other Ilonggo and Cebuano dishes, Conlu said the genesis for that was when his brother came to Saipan to work for one of the big hotels on island.

"My brother, who is a cook, one day prepared the dishes I missed since he knew I love ilonggo food like cansi, chicken inasal, etc."

And after tasting the food he served, Conlu had a eureka moment and told his brother, "this is the food I want to serve in our new restaurant."

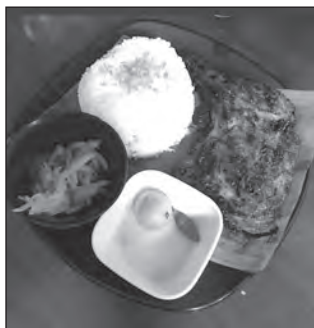
Conlu's thought process was while there was already chicken inasal on Saipan, it didn't really approximate the



Kanto Diyes, located along Flores Rosa Street corner Alaihai Avenue near the back of Dollar Days in Garapan, celebrated its first-year anniversary yesterday, Sept. 15.

authentic taste of chicken inasal back home. A few months after that, he and his wife said goodbye to their old employer and started Kanto Diyes using savings and money borrowed from relatives.

From a three-table essentially hole-in-the-wall restaurant, Kanto Diyes eventually



Kanto Diyes' iconic chicken inasal meal.

grew twice its original size in four months after Conlu and company finally headed their customers' plea to expand.

Conlu admitted while they didn't really expect Kanto Diyes to immediately strike a chord to Filipinos' palates on Saipan, more surprising was along the way they managed to attract an unexpected crowd—the Korean tourist market—and he owes it all to a Korean dive shop owner.

"He always brought his clients here and eventually word of mouth via social media spread and made Kanto Diyes viral in Korea. I would say 30% of our customers now are made up of Korean tourists."

Conlu also recalled the fateful day when he fired up

the grill for a lovely Korean couple after he already closed Kanto Diyes following their usual lunch rush.

"They happened to come here at Kanto Diyes after 2pm. Good thing I came back to get something at the restaurant and seeing he and his girlfriend waiting outside, I decided to cook for them and the rest was history as far as capturing more of the Korean tourist market was concerned."

He added, nowadays many from Korea feel that their Saipan vacation won't be complete without dining at Kanto Diyes and some days they will even see Korean tourists with their luggage in tow eating at the restaurant.

"It's now considered a kind of a destination for them and they don't want go home without first eating here."

Conlu, meanwhile, said they decided to extend their first-year anniversary promotion on unlimited rice and free can of coke for every set meal ordered to Tuesday, Sept. 17. He said this is their way of thanking the com-



Kanto Diyes owner Dante Suarez Conlu said 30% of its customers are now made up of Korean tourists.

munity for embracing their small business.

As for plans for the next year, he said Kanto Diyes is weighing plans to open a second location on the island, but this time at a more commercial area. Conlu also said they may open for breakfast serving silog meals by early 2025.

"We're just grateful and thankful to our loyal customers who until now patronize and keep coming back to dine at Kanto Diyes. We also see new faces everyday even if it's already one year since we opened. Aside from ilonggos and Korean tourists, we also

get the younger generation who just vacationed in the Philippines and ate chicken inasal back home. They're thankful that we bought this iconic dish to Saipan," he said.

Kanto Diyes is open for dine-in and takeout every day from 11am to 9:30pm. It can seat a maximum of 50 customers and is located along Flores Rosa Street corner Alaihai Avenue near the back of Dollar Days in Garapan.

For more information, to reserve, or to order in advance, call (670) 989-2728, (670) 483-2227, or email dconlu30@gmail.com. Kanto Diyes is also on Facebook.

Walgreens to pay \$106M to settle allegations it submitted false payment claims for prescriptions

WASHINGTON (AP)—Walgreens has agreed to pay \$106 million to settle lawsuits that alleged the pharmacy chain submitted false payment claims with government health care programs for prescriptions that were never dispensed.

The settlement announced on Friday resolves lawsuits filed in New Mexico, Texas and Florida on behalf of three people who had worked in Walgreens' pharmacy operation. The lawsuits were filed under a whistleblower provision of the False Claims Act

that lets private parties file case on behalf of the United States government and share in the recovery of money, the U.S. Justice Department said. The pharmacy chain was accused of submitting false payment claims to Medicare, Medicaid and other federal health care programs between 2009 and 2020 for prescriptions that were processed but never picked up.

Settlement documents say Walgreens cooperated in the investigation and has improved its electronic management system to pre-

vent such problems from occurring again.

In a statement, Walgreens said that because of a software error, the chain inadvertently billed some government programs for a relatively small number of prescriptions that patients submitted but never picked up.

"We corrected the error, reported the issue to the government and voluntarily refunded all overpayments," the statement by Walgreens said.

In reaching the settlement, the chain didn't acknowledge legal liability in the cases.

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 09-2024

Opening date: September 16, 2024

Closing date: October 04, 2024

Location: SAIPAN

Position(s): (1) Custodial-I
(1) Ports Police Officer-I
(2) General Maintenance-I

Location: TINIAN

Position(s): (1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance-I
(1) General Maintenance-II
(1) Radio Operator/Weather Observer

Location: ROTA

Position(s): (1) General Maintenance-II
(1) Radio Operator/Weather Observer

SALARY

PL 1/1 to 1/12 (\$7.26/hr to \$12.42/hr)
PL 7/1 to 7/12 (\$9.73/hr. to \$16.65/hr)
PL 3/1 to 3/12 (\$8.01/hr to \$13.70/hr)

SALARY

PL 5/1 to 5/12 (\$8.83/hr to \$15.10/hr)
PL 5/1 to 5/12 (\$8.83/hr to \$15.10/hr)
PL 7/1 to 7/12 (\$9.73/hr to \$16.65/hr)

SALARY

PL 5/1 to 5/12 (\$8.83/hr to \$15.10/hr)
PL 7/1 to 7/12 (\$9.73/hr to \$16.65/hr)


Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than 5:00 P.M. on **Friday, October 04, 2024.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays and austerity, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

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LEO B. TUDELA

Executive Director



COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-24-033
WAREHOUSE SPACE LEASE FOR CUC SAIPAN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from firms for the lease of warehouse space for CUC Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The proposed warehouse space must comply with DPW, OSHA and CNMI Zoning regulations.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 for one RFP package set followed by completion of registration with the CUC Procurement & Supply.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **“CUC-RFP-24-033, Warehouse Space Lease for CUC Saipan”** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on October 10, 2024.** Proposals mailed via postal, or courier service must be received on or before the due date and time. Late submissions will not be considered.

Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This proposal and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements during Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, pay any cost incurred in preparing the proposal under this request, or procure our contract for services.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on September 17, 2024** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Pepe Liwanag, CUC Warehouse Manager, via email at pepe.liwanag@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Senior Administrative Technician at marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

KEVIN O. WATSON

Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN

Purchasing Administrator

World

How strip of land in Gaza has become obstacle to cease-fire

A narrow strip of scrubland and sand dunes on the Gaza side of the border with Egypt has emerged as a major obstacle in talks aimed at halting the Israel-Hamas war and freeing scores of hostages.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says Israel must maintain control over the so-called Philadelphia corridor to prevent Hamas from replenishing its arsenal through smuggling tunnels under the border. He says that's necessary to ensure the group can never again launch an attack into Israel like the one on Oct. 7 that ignited the war.

However, Israeli media have cited military officials saying any tunnels into neighboring Egypt had been sealed from the Egyptian side for years before the war, making smuggling through them unlikely.

Many Israelis, including the defense minister, say Israel should relinquish the corridor, at least for a short period of time, in order to secure an agreement to bring back around 100 hostages still held in Gaza, about a third of whom are believed to be dead.

The debate reached a fever pitch at the beginning of September after Israel recovered the bodies of six hostages the military says Hamas killed as troops closed in. Critics say they could have been returned alive in a cease-fire deal and accuse Netanyahu of sabotaging the talks for his own political interests.

Hamas has demanded a full withdrawal from Gaza and says Netanyahu only raised the demand for the Philadelphia corridor in recent weeks to derail the talks.

Netanyahu blames Hamas for the lack of a deal and says the demand is not new.

Egypt, which has served as a key mediator, is also opposed to any Israeli presence along the Gaza side of its border and says it would threaten the decades-old peace treaty between the two countries, a cornerstone of regional stability.

The Philadelphia corridor is an empty strip—only 100 meters (yards) wide in some places—that runs the 14-kilometer (8.6-mile) length of the Gaza side of the border with Egypt. It includes the Rafah crossing, which was Gaza's only outlet to the outside world not controlled by Israel until the army captured the entire corridor in May.

At a Sept. 2 news conference, Netanyahu said Hamas had been using tunnels under the border to import arms, allowing it to build up the military machine it deployed on Oct. 7. He said the smuggling under the corridor provided “oxygen” for Hamas.

Israel's Haaretz news outlet, however, cited military officials this week saying there was little chance the tunnels had been used for years. It reported that Israeli troops had found nine tunnels running under the Philadelphia corridor, all sealed from the Egyptian side since Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi came to power in 2013 and launched a campaign to destroy tunnels. (AP)

Ukraine renews calls on West to approve long-range strikes on Russian territory

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Ukraine made a new call Saturday on the West to allow it to strike deeper into Russia after a meeting between U.S. and British leaders a day earlier produced no visible shift in their policy on the use of long-range weapons.

The renewed appeal came as Kyiv said Russia launched more drone and artillery attacks into Ukraine overnight.

“Russian terror begins at weapons depots, airfields and military bases inside the Russian Federation,” Ukrainian presidential adviser Andriy Yermak said Saturday. “Permission to strike deep into Russia will speed up the solution.”

Ukrainian officials have repeatedly called on allies to greenlight the use of Western-provided long-range weapons to strike targets deep inside Russian territory. So far, the U.S. has allowed Kyiv to use American-provided weapons only in a limited area inside Russia's border with Ukraine.

Discussions on allowing long-range strikes were believed to be on the table when U.S. President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer met in Washington on Friday but no decision was announced immediately.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been pressing the U.S. and other allies to allow his forces to use Western weapons to target air bases and launch sites farther afield as Russia has stepped up assaults on Ukraine's electricity grid and utilities before winter.

He did not directly comment on the meeting Saturday morning, but said that more than 70 Russian drones had been launched into Ukraine overnight. The Ukrainian air force later said that 76 Russian drones had been sighted, of which 72 were shot down.

“We need to boost our air defense and long-range capabilities to protect our people,” Zelenskyy wrote on social media. “We are working on this with all of Ukraine's partners.”

Other overnight attacks saw one person killed by Russian artillery fire as energy infrastructure was targeted in Ukraine's Sumy region. A 54-year-old driver was killed and seven more people were hospitalized, Ukraine's Ministry of Energy said.

Another three people died Saturday in a Russian strike on an agricultural enterprise in the front-line town of Huliapole in the Zaporizhzhia region, Gov. Ivan Fedorov said.

Meanwhile, officials in Moscow have continued to make public statements warning that long-range strikes would provoke further escalation between Russia and the West. The remarks are in line with the narrative the Kremlin has promoted since early in the war, accusing NATO countries of de-facto participation in the conflict and threatening a response.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told state news agency Tass on Saturday that the U.S. and British governments were pushing the conflict, which began with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, toward “poorly controlled escalation.”

Biden on Friday brushed off similar comments by Russian President Vladimir Putin, who said on Thursday that allowing long-range strikes “would mean that NATO countries, the United States and European countries, are at war with Russia.”

Life & Style

Prince Harry turns 40, moves to middle age

LONDON (AP)—Prince Harry was always something different.

From the moment he first appeared in public, snuggled in Princess Diana’s arms outside the London hospital where he was born in 1984, Harry was the ginger-haired scamp who stuck his tongue out at photographers.

He grew to be a boisterous adolescent who was roundly criticized for wearing a Nazi uniform to a costume party, and then a young man who gave up the trappings of royal life and moved to Southern California with his American wife.

Through it all, there was a sense that Harry was rebelling against an accident of birth that made him, in

the harsh calculus of the House of Windsor, just “the spare.” As the second son of the man who is now King Charles III, he was raised as a prince but wouldn’t inherit the throne unless brother William came to harm.

Harry is turning 40 on Sunday. That’s the halfway point in many lives, providing a chance to either dwell on the past or look forward to what might still be achieved.

For the past four years, Harry has focused mainly on the past, making millions of dollars by airing his grievances in a wildly successful memoir and a Netflix docu-series. But he faces the likelihood that the royal aura so critical to his image may be fading, said Sally Bedell Smith, author of

“Charles: The Passions and Paradoxes of an Improbable Life.”

“He is at a sort of crossroads,” Smith told The Associated Press. “And he appears to be struggling with how he wants to proceed.”

How did we get here?

It wasn’t always this way.

Six years ago, Harry and his wife were among the most popular royals, a glamorous young couple who reflected the multicultural face of modern Britain and were expected to help revitalize the monarchy.

Their wedding on May 19, 2018 united a grandson of Queen Elizabeth II with the former Meghan Markle, a biracial American actress who had starred for seven years in the U.S. television drama



AP
Britain’s Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex, waves during the Formula One U.S. Grand Prix auto race at Circuit of the Americas, on Oct. 22, 2023, in Austin, Texas.

“Suits.” George Clooney, Serena Williams and Elton John attended their wedding at Windsor Castle, after which the couple were formally

known as the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

But the optimism quickly faded amid allegations that Britain’s tabloid media and even members of the royal household treated Meghan unfairly because of racism.

By January of 2020, the pressures of life in the gilded cage had become too much, and the couple announced they were giving up royal duties and moving to America, where they hoped to become “financially independent.” They signed lucrative deals with Netflix and Spotify as they settled into the wealthy enclave of Montecito, near Santa Barbara, California.

Since then, Harry has missed few opportunities to bare his soul, most famously in his memoir, aptly titled “Spare.”

In the ghostwritten book, Harry recounted his grief at the death of Princess Diana, a fight with Prince William and

his unease with life in the royal shadow of his elder brother. From accounts of cocaine use and losing his virginity to raw family rifts, the book was rife with damning allegations about the royal family.

Among the most toxic was Harry’s description of how some family members leaked unflattering information about other royals in exchange for positive coverage of themselves. The prince singled out his father’s second wife, Queen Camilla, accusing her of feeding private conversations to the media as she sought to rehabilitate an image tarnished by her role in the breakup of Charles’ marriage to Diana.

The allegations were so venomous that there is little chance of a return to public duty, Smith said.

“He criticized the royal family in such a powerful and damaging way. You can’t unsay those things,” she said. “And you can’t unsee things like Meghan in that Netflix series doing a mock curtsy. It’s such a demeaning gesture to the queen.”

Harry, who agreed not to use the honorific HRH, or “his royal highness,” after he stepped away from front-line royal duties, is now fifth in line to the British throne, behind his brother and William’s three children.

While he grew up in a palace and is said to be in line to inherit millions of pounds on his 40th birthday from a trust set up by his great-grandmother, applied developmental psychologist Deborah Heiser thinks that, in many ways, Harry is just like the rest of us.

Cardi B reveals birth of 3rd child with Offset; says newborn is ‘prettiest lil thing’

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Cardi B has welcomed her third child into the world.

The Grammy winner announced on social media Thursday that she gave birth over the weekend. She posted photos of her holding and breastfeeding the newborn in a hospital.

“The prettiest lil thing,” she wrote in the post, followed by the date Sept. 7.

A representative for Cardi B has not immediately responded to an email for comment regarding the birth.

Cardi B, 31, announced she was pregnant last month on

the same day she filed for divorce from rapper Offset, who is shown in the photos on social media alongside her and holding the baby. Last month, she asked the courts for primary custody of her children and sought child support from Offset, 32, who is known for his successful solo career and being a member of the rap group Migos.

The hip-hop couple secretly wed in 2017 in Atlanta.

Along with their newborn, Cardi B and Offset have two other children together: 6-year-old daughter Kulture and 2-year-old son Wave.



AP
Cardi B, left, and Offset arrive at the Pre-Grammy Gala And Salute To Industry Icons in Beverly Hills, Calif. on Jan. 25, 2020.

May-december online romance nears a critical moment

DEAR ABBY: I met a young man on Facebook. He is a philanthropist, and we have been talking for more than six months. He’s kind and sweet, and he tells me he loves me. He works around the world as an interior designer and will be returning to the States in a couple of weeks.

The problem is, I’m 30 years older than he is. He has seen photos of me and thinks I am beautiful and a good woman. I am stressed about meeting him because he wants a life together, even though I have shared all of my health issues. Please help me. I have tried to end it because of the age difference, but he gets very upset, and so we go on. I do care about him. What should I do?

WAFLING IN GEORGIA

DEAR WAFLING: Tread very carefully! Although you have communicated over the last six months, he may not “quite” be the person he has presented himself to be. Make no commitments until you have actually met him in person. Hold on to your skepticism and do not give him money for ANY reason, because things that seem too good to be true often are.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: I’m dating a single dad with a teenage daughter who lives with him full time. His daughter’s mother lives in the same town but rarely sees her. Mom does not want me to meet her daughter and offered the solution of

taking her daughter to live with her.

Six months later, Mom has yet to commit to actually having her daughter live with her. Because of this, I am no longer spending time at my boyfriend’s home, and it’s driving a wedge between us. We’ve been dating for a year and a half, and I’m now at my wits’ end. HELP!

WAITING IN NEW JERSEY

DEAR WAITING: Your boyfriend’s relationship with the mother of his child is not a healthy one. She doesn’t have custody of her daughter and she shouldn’t be dictating to whom the daughter is introduced. Ask him if he still feels the same about you that he did six months ago. If he says he does, suggest you get couples counseling because it feels like his ex has driven a wedge between you. His response should indicate the direction your relationship is headed.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: My brother lost his wife of 30-plus years to COVID. Because we live several states apart and I have significant chronic health issues of my own, I haven’t been able to spend as much time with him as I would like.

I call often just to check in, but wish I could do more to help him through his sorrow. The first anniversary of her death is approaching, and I’m uncertain how to handle it. Any advice is deeply appreciated.

CHECKING IN THE EAST

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR CHECKING: Because your health issues prevent you from traveling to see your brother, why not invite him to come for a visit? That way, you could be supportive, and he could have a therapeutic change of scene. If that’s not possible, the next best thing would be to video chat with him, which would enable you to meet face-to-face from time to time.

■■■■

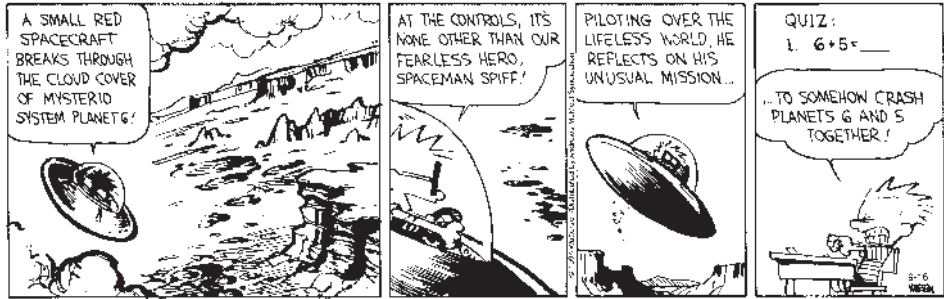
Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: “Abby’s Favorite Recipes” and “More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Task
4 Bridge call
9 Talk on and on
12 Rushmore prez
13 Opposite of day, in Berlin
14 Tic-tac-toe win
15 Major leap forward
17 — roll (winning)
18 "Shool!"
19 Pantry
21 — burger
24 Pampers rival
25 "Rocks"
26 Patient's need, for short
28 "Unhand me!"
31 Sandwich treat
33 Bottom line
35 Botch up
36 Haas of "Witness"
38 Short do
40 Winter bug

DOWN

1 Binge
2 Japanese sash
3 Arthur of "Maude"
4 Sense
5 Summery shades
6 Performance
7 Beach souvenir
8 Minne-sota's capital
9 "Great ideal!"
10 Top-notch
11 Piglet's pop
16 Egggy quaff
20 KOA patron
21 Old stringed instrument
22 Off-white
23 Best Buy's tech support team
27 Young lion
29 Coated with gold
30 Burden
32 Honolulu's isle
34 Gallo Winery setting
37 All-out attacks
39 Big bullies
42 Grown-up
44 Tax-collecting org.
45 Begged
46 Teeny bit
50 Corn serving
51 Media mogul
52 Okla-homa city
53 Mojito ingredient

Solution time: 21 mins.

Last Friday's answer 9-16

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
			13						14	
15		16						17		
		18				19		20		
21	22	23				24				
25			26		27		28		29	30
31		32		33		34		35		
36			37		38		39		40	
		41			42		43		44	
45	46						47			
48			49		50			51	52	53
54			55						56	
57			58						59	

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Nick Jonas, 32; Alexis Bledel, 43; Amy Poehler, 53; Mickey Rourke, 72.

Happy Birthday: Focus on something meaningful. Make your life purposeful and fulfilling, and you will make a difference. Be smart with your money and stick to the rules. Put contracts in place and practice what you preach. Rise above what you don't like and put more thought and love into what matters to you. Become the heartbeat and make your dreams come true. Live, love and laugh. Your numbers are 6, 11, 23, 27, 32, 38, 47.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Create opportunities. Waiting for things to happen isn't your first choice. Be the one to initiate what you want and take credit for your achievements. Life is about living, dreaming and writing your script. Fuel your fire. Show and express your true feelings. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Communicate, gather information and discover what you need to know to bring about positive change. Consider trends and how to use your skills, knowledge and experience to secure your position and prospects. Align yourself with forward-thinking associates. Take a stance and make a difference. ****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): A change of pace will help you recognize what you're missing. Rethink your routine and lifestyle, and replace what isn't working for you anymore. Happiness begins with the choices you make. Be good to yourself, and initiate the changes that offer peace of mind. Put yourself first. **

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Sign up for something that makes you feel alive. A healthy attitude and pouring your energy into doing and being your best will help you say

no to temptation and unnecessary excess. It's time to take better care of your emotional well-being. Look and do your best. ***

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Consider how to get the most out of your day. Consider how to use what you have to your advantage and to rid yourself of what you no longer use or need. Trust your instincts; you'll discover an outlet that eases stress and encourages a healthier lifestyle. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Choose your words wisely and put your energy into something that matters to you. Let your hope for a better future guide you to make a difference. Life choices that offer peace of mind will outweigh the stress the wrong path provides. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): An open mind will help you diminish negativity and encourage you to see the possibilities. Engage in what excites you, and you'll learn from your experiences. Give your best, and you'll receive what you require to turn your hopes and wishes into a reality. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Size up what's possible and do whatever it takes to reach your goal. Home improvements will spark your imagination and encourage you to resolve concerns regarding money or health issues. Take responsibility and create opportunities. Use your skills to propagate and promote what you have to offer. ****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Keep moving. Participate in activities that stir your soul and prompt you to find solutions and to change things that concern you. Don't let anyone lead you astray or deter you from doing what's right and best for you. Create opportunities, and you'll get positive results. ***

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Go over your expenses, assets and liabilities and find a way to cut corners or make your life easier. Put your heart and soul into what you do; it will pay off. Use your intelligence and expertise to make a difference to the outcome. ****

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Your objective is to pay attention to where your money goes. Talk to an expert or someone you trust, and do your due diligence regarding investments, budgets and lifestyle changes that can save you money. Be open to suggestions, but take responsibility for your actions and reaching your objective. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Rethink your journey and take the path that simplifies your life. Too much of anything will drag you down. Focus on what's important to you and the people who improve your life. Put your energy into contributing something worthwhile and making a difference. Take responsibility for your happiness. ***

Birthday Baby: You are intelligent, efficient and innovative. You are adaptable and far-reaching.

©: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. **: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ***: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ****: Aim high; start new projects. *****: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

								4	9
4		1		2	3	7	8		
6	2	9				5	1	3	
		3			2		7		
7	1	2	5	6	4				
	9	6	8			4			
1	7		3		9	8	6	2	
		4					3	7	
2									

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Friday's Answer

6	9	4	1	5	7	2	8	3
7	3	5	6	2	8	4	9	1
1	8	2	4	9	3	5	6	7
2	6	3	5	1	4	8	7	9
8	4	7	3	6	9	1	2	5
5	1	9	8	7	2	6	3	4
3	2	8	9	4	1	7	5	6
4	7	6	2	3	5	9	1	8
9	5	1	7	8	6	3	4	2

Difficulty: ★ 9/16
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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

CONVINCE ME Solution: 7 letters

E C N E U L F N I M P R E S S
U X O T Y F I T S U J S E T C
R R P N H B M A R K E T R H O
T E G L V I L D V L A O A P R
E A E E A E N E L R N N O E R
L S S S S I R K T G G W E R E
B O S A F I N S N E E O S S C
A N U C F V N I E R F H S U T
V T C Y A O L A F A F S V A N
I I S L M L S U C L E I D S E
E M I E E S L T P E C C A I U
C D D P U E S W A Y T V E V Q
N A M R O F N I N S P I R E O
O O E Y L E K I L A C I G O L
C O N C L U S I V E C I T N E

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Accept, Admit, Advise, Assure, Case, Change, Compelling, Conceivable, Conclusive, Converse, Correct, Demonstrate, Discuss, Effect, Eloquent, Entice, Explain, Facts, Find, Impress, Influence, Inform, Inspire, Justify, Likely, Logical, Market, Persuasive, Powerful, Reason, Sales, Sell, Show, Strong, Sway, Think, True, Urge, Valid, Verify

Last Friday's answer: Frogfish
The NEW Volume 77 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.
or call 1-800-642-6480, (in Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Cook scores 3 TDs to help Bills rout Dolphins, 31-10



**M I A M I
G A R D E N S,
Fla.** (AP)—
Buffalo fans
cheered so

loudly in Hard Rock Stadium that Bills coach Sean McDermott was asked if it was a home game.

It wasn't. But Buffalo certainly gave fans who made the trip to South Florida plenty to celebrate Thursday night.

James Cook caught a touchdown pass and ran for two scores and the Bills routed Miami 31-10, with Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa leaving early because of a concussion.

Tagovailoa left in the third quarter after colliding with defensive back Damar Hamlin and hitting the back of his head against the turf. Tagovailoa was quickly ruled out with the concussion, casting doubt on his season after a history of dealing with head injuries.

"Very sad. It's the worst part of the game," Bills quarterback Josh Allen said. "Nothing but love and prayers to him and his family, and hopefully everyone is sending those because he's going to need them."

Coach Mike McDaniels did not specify if the Dolphins will place Tagovailoa on injured reserve, saying the team would evaluate him more Friday.

"I'm just worried about my teammate like the rest of the guys are," McDaniels said. "We'll get more information tomorrow and then take it day by day from there."

Allen, playing with a glove on his left non-throwing hand after hurting it in Buffalo's



Buffalo Bills running back James Cook (4) scores a touchdown during the first half of an NFL football game against the Miami Dolphins, Thursday, Sept. 12, 2024, in Miami Gardens, Fla. AP

opener, completed 13 of 19 passes for 139 yards. He's 12-2 against the Dolphins, and the Bills are 14-2 against Miami since McDermott's first year as head coach in 2017.

McDermott praised the outing from his defense, which had three turnovers and held Miami's high-flying offense to a touchdown and field goal despite missing several starters.

"Next man up. The guys did a great job," McDermott said. "These guys work hard. Good things happen when you work hard, and sometimes the ball

finds you like that."

Cook caught a 17-yard touchdown pass from Allen and scored on runs of 1 and 49 yards in the first half, flipping into the end zone when he gave the Bills a 24-7 lead. The three first-half touchdowns tied a team record.

"As long as they trust me, I'm going to get in the end zone," Cook said.

Allen didn't appear limited by the left hand that he hurt after hurdling safety Budda Baker in Buffalo's opener against the Cardinals. He had

his hand heavily wrapped before returning to finish that game and practiced all week with a glove to protect it.

After the game and before leaving the field, Allen held up his hand and flexed it in front of fans as if to display that it's not broken.

"Feels great," Allen said later.

Backup Mitchell Trubisky replaced Allen late in the fourth Thursday with Buffalo up by 21.

Miami's star receiver Tyreek Hill was held to three catches for 24 yards during a

week in which he dominated national headlines. Hill was pulled from his sports car by Miami-Dade County police officers, pushed face-first onto a street and handcuffed during a traffic stop outside the Dolphins' home stadium hours before their season opener.

Officer Danny Torres was placed on administrative duty as the department's director launched an internal affairs investigation. Hill said he wants the officer fired, but the 30-year-old also acknowledged he could

have handled the interaction better in the moment.

Buffalo scored 10 points off two first-half turnovers by Tagovailoa. Ja'Marcus Ingram intercepted Tagovailoa's pass on a tipped ball intended for receiver Grant DuBose on Miami's opening drive. Then Christian Benford picked off a pass on what appeared to be miscommunication between the quarterback and receiver Robbie Chosen. Both DuBose and Chosen arrived to the team after the preseason.

Tagovailoa threw another interception to Ingram trying to toss the ball out of bounds on Miami's opening drive of the third. Ingram returned the ball 31 yards for a score that put Buffalo up 31-10. It was Tagovailoa's third career game with three interceptions.

Tagovailoa ran for a first down with 4:36 in the third and collided head-first into Hamlin and hit his head on the ground.

Bills players, as well as Tagovailoa's teammates, immediately waved for trainers to come to the field. The fifth-year quarterback was helped to his feet after a few minutes and walked under his own power to the locker room with trainers after throwing for 145 yards and a 5-yard touchdown to DeVon Achane.

Tagovailoa was diagnosed with two concussions in 2022. Skylar Thompson replaced him Thursday.

"I'm not worried about anything that's out of my hands," McDaniels said. "I'm just worried about the human being. He'll drive the ship when we get the appropriate information."

Aaron Rodgers and the Jets visit the Titans with both trying to avoid 0-2 starts

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—The NFL did the New York Jets and four-time NFL MVP Aaron Rodgers no favors scheduling their first three games over the span of 11 days.

The Tennessee Titans have a different challenge.

Sure, they're back in Music City for their home opener Sunday. But they go from defending a rookie quarterback taken No. 1 overall in Caleb Williams to a Super Bowl champ in his 20th NFL season who can punish defenses who bite on his play-calling with a flick of his wrist for a touchdown pass.

Two-time Pro Bowl defensive lineman Jeffery Simmons said Rodgers probably has the best hard count outside of Titans offensive line guru Bill Callahan. Rodgers also knows how to avoid contact.

"He don't give you the op-

portunity to hit him," Simmons said.

The Titans opened with a 24-17 loss in Chicago. Tennessee turned in the franchise's best season-opening defensive performance in nearly three decades, allowing only 148 yards. A 17-0 lead disappeared as Will Levis had three turnovers, including a pick-6, and a blocked punt was returned for a touchdown.

The Jets lost 32-19 on Monday night to San Francisco. Now both teams are trying to avoid 0-2 starts, but the Jets are back on the road again facing an even quicker turnaround in facing New England on Sept. 19.

"It's going to be a great challenge," Jets coach Robert Saleh said.

Rodgers watched the end of the Jets' loss from the bench in his first game since his season-ending Achilles tendon injury

in the 2023 opener. He was 13 of 21 for 167 yards with his one touchdown pass coming off a free play when he got the 49ers to jump offense.

He wants the Jets to find a way to stay on the field for more than 49 plays Sunday.

"We've got to help our defense out," Rodgers said. "You know, if it takes 30 to win, we've got to score 30, so it wasn't good enough on our part. I hope nobody's getting frustrated. It's one week."

Running Rodgers

One of the biggest tests for Rodgers in his return from his torn Achilles tendon was how mobile he could be when he was forced out of the pocket.

It's a work in progress, but the 40-year-old quarterback moved around without issue—even if he didn't quite resemble the athletic playmaker who ran for more than

200 yards in nine seasons, but not since 2018. Rodgers now moves around buying time to find someone downfield.

"The more comfortable I am out there, the more game reps I have, it's just going to keep getting more confident to do those things," Rodgers said. "I've always played with the ability to extend plays. Now it's changed."

Titanic drought

Tennessee's streak is at 36 consecutive games without scoring at least 30 points in a regular-season game. The Titans jumped out to a 17-0 lead in the first half of the opener and didn't score again.

Five-time Pro Bowl wide receiver DeAndre Hopkins was Levis' favorite option as a rookie and is not on the injury report this week after being sidelined July 31 by an injured left knee. The 12-year

veteran says he's good and has reminded teammates not to worry as long as they learn from the loss.

"That first game doesn't dictate the season," Hopkins said.

Leaky defense

Defense has been a Jets' strength the past several years and expected to be outstanding again this season. It was anything but against San Francisco.

New York allowed scores on eight straight drives and allowed backup Jordan Mason to run for a career-high 147 yards. Saleh called that surprising with the Jets' usual attention to discipline.

The next challenge is Tennessee's Tony Pollard, who ran for 82 yards on 16 carries against Chicago.

"That's not the norm for us and nevertheless, we put that on tape, right?" Jets defensive

end Jermaine Johnson said. "So we've got to go out the next week and put that to bed pretty quick, which I have full confidence that we'll do."

Good start

Allen Lazard signed a four-year, \$44 million contract with the Jets last year, then struggled mightily with 23 catches for 311 yards and a touchdown in 14 games before being inactive the final two games.

Lazard dropped a third-down pass from his former Packers teammate on the Jets' first drive at San Francisco. He bounced back with two TD catches—one each from Rodgers and Tyrod Taylor. He finished with six receptions for 89 yards, both single-game highs while with New York.

"Last year was definitely really hard for him, but that's the Allen that I think you guys have all seen in in training camp and the Allen that I know and love on Monday night," Rodgers said of the receiver.

Bobby Witt Jr. passes 100 RBIs and Royals beat Pirates



PITTSBURGH (AP)—Bobby

Witt Jr. drove in his 100th run of the season with a solo homer in the first inning, and the Kansas City Royals beat the Pittsburgh Pirates 5-1 on Saturday.

Witt also hit a sacrifice fly in the fifth and a run-scoring double in the sixth. He went 2 for 3 to raise his MLB-leading batting average to .333. He also has 31 homers and 102 RBIs.

Michael Wacha (13-7) gave up one run in five innings to improve to 9-1 with a 2.68 ERA in 13 starts since the beginning of July. He allowed four hits, walked three and struck out eight.

The Royals won for the seventh time in nine games since a seven-game losing streak as they try to reach the postseason for the first time since winning the World Series in 2015. The Royals also assured themselves of their first winning season since 2015 by raising their record to 82-67.

RED SOX 7, YANKEES 1
NEW YORK (AP)—Rafael Devers' intentional walk by Gerrit Cole with no one on base sparked a three-run fourth inning, and Devers added a two-run single in Boston's four-run fifth as the Red Sox beat New York.

Cole (6-5), the reigning AL Cy Young Award winner, hadn't allowed a hit and led 1-0 when he walked Devers with one out in the fourth. Boston's only runner until then had been Devers, who was hit by a pitch in the first and erased on a double play.

After retiring nine of his first 10 batters, Cole allowed 10 of the next 12 to reach base. The 34-year-old right-hander gave up seven runs, his most since June 9, 2022, hit a career-high three batters and left after 4 1/3 innings.

Brayan Bello (14-7) gave up one run and four hits in 5 1/3 innings for the Red Sox.

BLUE JAYS 7, CARDINALS 2

TORONTO (AP)—José Berrios pitched seven strong innings to win his seventh straight start, Vladimir Guerrero Jr. drove in his 500th career run and scored twice, and Toronto beat St. Louis.

Guerrero, 25, is the youngest player in Blue Jays history to reach 500 RBIs. Davis Schneider went 3 for 4 with a home run and drove in two as Toronto won its second straight.

Addison Barger had two hits and an RBI and Alejandro Kirk drove in a pair



Kansas City Royals' Bobby Witt Jr. (7) hits a sacrifice fly off Pittsburgh Pirates starting pitcher Mitch Keller, scoring Maikel Garcia from third, during the fifth inning of a baseball game in Pittsburgh, Saturday, Sept. 14, 2024.

as the Blue Jays handed the Cardinals their first series loss against an AL East opponent in more than two years.

PHILLIES 6, METS 4

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Bryce Harper homered twice, Cal Stevenson hit a two-run, go-ahead double in the seventh and made a run-saving, highlight-reel catch in the eighth and NL East-leading Philadelphia rallied to cool off New York.

J.T. Realmuto added an RBI double for the Phillies, who have won 10 of 13 and lead the Mets by eight games in the division. The teams will wrap up the three-game series on Sunday afternoon before the Mets host the Phillies for four games Sept. 19-22.

Starling Marte singled, tripled and drove in three runs and Luisangel Acuña had a pair of singles in his major-league debut for the Mets, who lost for just the third time in the last 15 games. New York began play Saturday holding the final wild card spot in the National League, one game ahead of the Braves.

NATIONALS 4, MARLINS 1

WASHINGTON (AP)—Jose Tena had two hits including a home run, Patrick Corbin pitched six innings and Washington beat Miami.

Joey Gallo and Juan Yezpez also homered for Washington, which has won three of four, and Keibert Ruiz had two hits.

Tena is 13-for-36 (.361) in his past nine games, hitting safely in eight of them.

Corbin (6-13) has won four of his past five starts. He allowed a run on three hits with a walk and six strikeouts. Corbin didn't allow a hit

after the second inning and retired 13 of his last 15 batters.

ORIOLES 4, TIGERS 1

DETROIT (AP)—One day after breaking up a no-hitter in the ninth inning, Gunnar Henderson homered and doubled to help Baltimore beat Detroit.

Henderson drove in two runs and scored twice to help the Orioles move within two games of the AL East-leading Yankees. The All-Star shortstop tripled with two out in the ninth for Baltimore's only hit in a 1-0 loss to Detroit on Friday night.

The Tigers trailed 4-0 going into the ninth on Saturday, but Parker Meadows ended Detroit's scoreless streak at 15 innings with a homer off Seranthony Domínguez. Colt Keith followed with a single, but Domínguez retired Kerry Carpenter and Riley Greene on deep flyballs.

GUARDIANS 6, RAYS 1

CLEVELAND (AP)—Lane Thomas and José Ramírez hit back-to-back eighth-inning homers and Joey Cantillo pitched five scoreless innings as AL Central-leading Cleveland beat Tampa Bay.

The Guardians remained three games ahead of second-place Kansas City in the division with 13 games remaining. Cleveland has the best home record in the AL at 44-27 and is 85-64 overall, second in the league to the New York Yankees.

Josh Naylor's two-run single through a drawn-in infield ignited a three-run sixth that extended Cleveland's lead to 4-0. David Fry added a sacrifice fly off Tyler Alexander (6-5), scoring Ramírez, who had been intentionally walked for a

franchise-record 88th time.

REDS 11, TWINS 1

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—TJ Friedl went 4 for 4 with a two-run homer and Nick Martinez pitched six strong innings for his third straight win as Cincinnati routed scuffling Minnesota.

Jake Fraley had three hits for the Reds, including a solo homer. Cincinnati scored nine times in the fourth to put away the game early.

Minnesota remained 2 1/2 games ahead of Detroit for the final American League playoff berth but dropped 3 1/2 games behind Kansas City for the league's second wild card.

WHITE SOX 7, ATHLETICS 6

CHICAGO (AP)—Andrew Benintendi hit a leadoff homer in the ninth inning, and Chicago stopped a 16-game home losing streak by edging Oakland.

Benintendi, Luis Robert Jr., Nicky Lopez and Lenyn Sosa each had three hits for Chicago, which had dropped four in a row overall. Lopez finished with three RBIs.

The home slide was a franchise record. At 34-115, the White Sox are hoping to avoid the majors' post-1900 record for losses—120 by the 1962 New York Mets in their inaugural season.

BRAVES 10, DODGERS 1

ATLANTA (AP)—Chris Sale allowed one run and struck out six over six innings, shutting down Shohei Ohtani in the process, for his major league-leading 17th win of the season as Atlanta beat Los Angeles.

Ohtani, who had a strike-

out and walk, has stalled in his quest to be the first player in MLB history to hit 50 home runs and steal 50 bases in a season, going 0 for 6 in his last two games since hitting his major league-best 47th home run on Wednesday against the Chicago Cubs.

Sale (17-3), who hasn't been charged with a loss since June 27, became the first player in Braves franchise history to allow no more than two earned runs in 17 straight starts, passing Hall of Famer Greg Maddux's previous record of 16 starts. He also surpassed Padres starter Dylan Cease for most strikeouts in the NL this season with 219.

Atlanta is now a season-high 14 games over .500 and pulled even with the Mets for the final NL wild-card spot. New York lost at the Phillies 6-4 on Saturday night.

ROCKIES 6, CUBS 5, 10 INNINGS

DENVER (AP)—Pinch-hitter Sam Hilliard tied the score with a two-run homer in the ninth inning and Brenton Doyle delivered a game-winning single in the 10th as Colorado rallied to beat Chicago.

Michael Toglia homered, Charlie Blackmon had three hits and Doyle drove in three runs for the last-place Rockies, who took their second consecutive game from Chicago.

Cody Bellinger and Pete Crow-Armstrong each hit a solo homer for the Cubs, who are six games behind the Braves and Mets for the third NL wild card.

The Rockies trailed 5-3 going into the bottom of the ninth, and their first two batters struck out against reliever Porter Hodge. But then Hunter Goodman drew a walk to bring up Hilliard, who was batting for Jordan Beck.

BREWERS 15, DIAMONDBACKS 8

PHOENIX (AP)—Willy Adames hit a grand slam as part of a two-homer night, Garrett Mitchell added a two-run homer and Milwaukee beat Arizona.

Milwaukee's magic number to win the NL Central is down to 3. The Brewers will go for the three-game sweep Sunday.

Arizona (82-66) still has sole possession of the second NL wild-card spot, but is just one game ahead of the Atlanta Braves (81-67) and the New York Mets (81-67) with 14 games to play.

Milwaukee's Tobias Myers (8-5) gave up four runs on nine hits over six innings. He struck out three.

PADRES 8, GIANTS 0

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Joe Musgrove struck out eight in six innings, Manny Machado and Jackson Merrill both drove in two runs and San Diego beat San Francisco to hand the Giants their third straight shutout.

Donovan Solano had four of San Diego's 17 hits and Xander Bogaerts homered for the Padres, who hold the top National League wild card. They clawed within 3 1/2 games of the first-place Dodgers in the NL West.

The Giants have lost four of five. They've been shut out in three consecutive games for the first time since 1992 and just the fourth time in the San Francisco era (since 1958).

ASTROS 5, ANGELS 3

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—Justin Verlander picked up his first win since returning from a neck injury and Yordan Alvarez hit a go-ahead home run in the fifth inning as Houston defeated Los Angeles.

Kyle Tucker added a pinch-hit homer, Jose Altuve had two hits and two runs scored, and the Astros won their third straight to remain 4 1/2 games ahead of second-place Seattle in the AL West.

Verlander (4-6) gave up two runs and four hits over five innings after he was 0-4 with a 9.69 ERA in four starts since returning Aug. 21 following a 2 1/2-month absence due to neck stiffness. He had two walks and two strikeouts while earning his first win since May 24 against Oakland.

Ryan Pressly pitched 1 2/3 scoreless innings for his fourth save.

MARINERS 5, RANGERS 4


SEATTLE (AP)—Randy Arozarena had a one-out bases-loaded single in the ninth inning to give Seattle Mariners a victory over Texas.

Victor Robles doubled and stole third, and Julio Rodriguez and Cal Raleigh walked before Arozarena hit a sharp ground ball off José Leclerc (6-5) that got by shortstop Josh Smith to score Robles. Arozarena has four career walk-off hits—three singles and a home run.

With Houston's victory over the Los Angeles Angels, the Mariners remained 4 1/2 games back in the AL West standings, and are 2 1/2 games behind the Minnesota Twins for the final AL wild-card spot.

Andrés Muñoz (3-6) pitched a scoreless ninth for the victory.

Sources: Cavaliers, Okoro agree to 3-year, \$38M deal

CLEVELAND (AP)—Restricted free agent forward Isaac Okoro has agreed to re-sign with the Cleveland Cavaliers on a three-year contract, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press on Saturday.

Okoro's new deal is worth \$38 million, according to the person who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the contract has not been signed

Source: Cav, Tristan Thompson agree to 1-year contract for 2024 season

CLEVELAND (AP)—Free agent center Tristan Thompson has agreed to a one-year contract to continue his second stint with the Cleveland Cavaliers, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press on Friday.

The 33-year-old Thompson returned to the Cavs last season after playing for Boston, Sacramento, Indiana, Chicago and the Los Angeles Lakers since 2020. Thompson played in 49 games last season, averaging 3.3 points and 3.6 rebounds.

Thompson's agent, Rich Paul, finalized the deal with the team on Friday, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the contract has not been signed. This season will be Thompson's 11th with Cleveland.

Although the 6-foot-10 Thompson isn't as productive on the court as he once was, the Cavs value his leadership for a young team.

Cleveland battled through numerous injuries last season and advanced to the second round of the playoffs before being beaten in five games in the Eastern Conference semi-finals by the Celtics, who went on to win the title.

Thompson was drafted by the Cavs in 2011 with the No. 4 overall pick. He became a core member of the Cleveland team that won the NBA championship in 2016.

Thompson has averaged 8.7 points and 8.1 rebounds in 779 career games.



AP Cleveland Cavaliers forward Isaac Okoro drives during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Los Angeles Clippers, Sunday, April 7, 2024, in Los Angeles.

or announced by the team.

ESPN.com first reported the agreement, citing Okoro's representation.

The fifth overall pick in the 2020 NBA draft, Okoro is Cleveland's best perimeter defender, often drawing the assignment of guarding the opponent's top scorer. Okoro also has worked to improve his offensive game.

The 23-year-old averaged 9.4 points and 3.0 rebounds

in 69 games—42 starts—last season for the Cavs, who beat Orlando in the opening round of the playoffs before losing to eventual champion Boston.

Okoro shot a career-best 39% on 3-pointers, forcing teams to come out and guard him.

His agreement caps an extraordinarily busy summer for the Cavs that began with coach J.B. Bickerstaff being fired and replaced by Kenny Atkinson. All-Star guard Donovan Mitchell signed a three-year, \$150 million extension in July, ending months of speculation that he wanted out of Cleveland.

Also, power forward Evan Mobley signed a five-year, \$224 deal and center Jarrett Allen signed a three-year, \$91 million extension.

PADONIA

From page 16

bodybuilding competitions as he has also competed in the Philippines in the past two years and started his bodybuilding journey in 2021.

He said of the competition in Guam, "The competition was pretty good." On his third-place win, "I feel great because I got the bronze, and I gave my best [body] condition."

He is now aiming for his bodybuilding pro card and will continue to improve his physique for the next competition.

According to an internet definition, having a pro card means that a bodybuilder has done one or more amateur bodybuilding competitions

and has excelled to a high enough level. Depending on the federation, the overall champion will be offered a pro card. Some federations offer pro cards to winners of individual weight class championships. This can mean that more than one bodybuilder earns a pro card each contest depending on what contest it is.

The waitstaff then thanked Dee Clayton, Northern Marianas Bodybuilding and Physique Federation president, for providing his needs for the competition, DC Clayton Classic family, and Gold's Gym Saipan for the support.

Clayton, on Padonia's win said, "It was tough... but he [was] able to pull through and place. He did his best and I am happy with him."

According to WNBF Guam's website, the WNBF

Guam is the first natural bodybuilding competition in Guam. Further, it said, natural bodybuilding is bodybuilding without the use of performance and image enhancing drugs. Natural bodybuilding provides athletes the opportunity to take part in the sport they love on a level playing field without taking health risks. Athletes who take part in WNBF Guam events are subject to drug testing and polygraphing to ensure their natural status. The WNBF Guam believes in promoting a culture of camaraderie, passion, professionalism and fairness.

The WNBF Guam is affiliated with the World Natural Bodybuilding Federation. The WNBF is the most prestigious natural bodybuilding federation in the world with over 40 affiliates worldwide.

NMI

From page 16

Ying (ACS), Megan Elayda (SSHS), Chae Eun Wendy Kim (Mount Carmel School), and Hannah Lim (MHS).

Victor Nash, who placed first in both qualifiers, said that

qualifying for the championships, "It's a great opportunity for me to compete with runners from other places. I know there are way faster runners out there, but I know that with experience, it will shape me to become a better runner, and just being able to qualify, it's an amazing

blessing and I just couldn't be more grateful for it."

Results of the second qualifier of the PSS/NMA All Schools Cross-Country 2024-2025—the Run Saipan Invitational—at the American Memorial Park will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

HMS

From page 16

their championship team last year. Even with that, on their first win of the season, he said, "We just want to show that we can still defend our title. We have a lot of young players this time around as compared to the other teams, but I think we can compete."

On how confident they are in defending their title, he said, "There's a lot of work to do, but I really like

our chances... we're going to run hard, we're going to do a lot of cardio—just like last year's team. Last year's team was older and this year, FMS is more talented, but my boys are going to work harder."

In other games that day, Francisco M. Sablan Middle School JV defeated Mount Carmel School JV, 44-13; FMS drowned Saipan Community School Guardians, 48-5; MCS took down Dandan Middle School, 30-9, and Tanapag Middle School overpowered Grace

Christian Academy, 38-6.

Games are played every Wednesday and Friday at the HMS Gym with the first game at 4:45pm and the last game at 6:15pm. The championship tourney is slated for Oct. 17-19.

HMS 36 – Taguiam 9, Abejo 6, Galarse 5, Tagabuel 4, Maceda 4, Tudela 2, Louis 2, Lizama 2, Agulto 2.

COVMS 12 – Pangelinan 5, Villagomez 3, Martin 2, Jones 1, Murphy 1.

Scoring by halves: 21-9, 36-12.

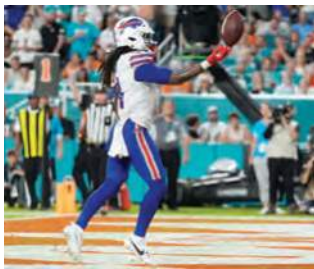
TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS				
AMERICAN LEAGUE				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	86	63	.577	—
Baltimore	84	65	.564	2
Boston	75	74	.503	11
Tampa Bay	73	76	.490	13
Toronto	71	78	.477	15
Central Division				
Cleveland	85	64	.570	—
Kansas City	82	67	.550	3
Minnesota	78	70	.527	6½
Detroit	76	73	.510	9
Chicago	34	115	.228	51
West Division				
Houston	80	68	.541	—
Seattle	76	73	.510	4½
Texas	71	78	.477	9½
Oakland	65	84	.436	15½
Los Angeles	60	88	.405	20
NATIONAL LEAGUE				
East Division				
Philadelphia	89	59	.601	—
Atlanta	81	67	.547	8
New York	81	67	.547	8
Washington	67	81	.453	22
Miami	55	94	.369	34½
Central Division				
Milwaukee	86	62	.581	—
Chicago	75	73	.507	11
St. Louis	74	74	.500	12
Cincinnati	73	77	.487	14
Pittsburgh	70	78	.473	16
West Division				
Los Angeles	87	61	.588	—
San Diego	84	65	.564	3½
Arizona	82	66	.554	5
San Francisco	72	77	.483	15½
Colorado	57	92	.383	30½

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL STANDINGS						
AMERICAN CONFERENCE						
East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	2	0	0	1.000	65	38
New England	1	0	0	1.000	16	10
Miami	1	1	0	.500	30	48
N.Y. Jets	0	1	0	.000	19	32
South						
Houston	1	0	0	1.000	29	27
Indianapolis	0	1	0	.000	27	29
Jacksonville	0	1	0	.000	17	20
Tennessee	0	1	0	.000	17	24
North						
Pittsburgh	1	0	0	1.000	18	10
Baltimore	0	1	0	.000	20	27
Cincinnati	0	1	0	.000	10	16
Cleveland	0	1	0	.000	17	33
West						
Kansas City	1	0	0	1.000	27	20
L.A. Chargers	1	0	0	1.000	22	10
Denver	0	1	0	.000	20	26
Las Vegas	0	1	0	.000	10	22
NATIONAL CONFERENCE						
East						
Dallas	1	0	0	1.000	33	17
Philadelphia	1	0	0	1.000	34	29
N.Y. Giants	0	1	0	.000	6	28
Washington	0	1	0	.000	20	37
South						
New Orleans	1	0	0	1.000	47	10
Tampa Bay	1	0	0	1.000	37	20
Atlanta	0	1	0	.000	10	18
Carolina	0	1	0	.000	10	47
North						
Chicago	1	0	0	1.000	24	17
Detroit	1	0	0	1.000	26	20
Minnesota	1	0	0	1.000	28	6
Green Bay	0	1	0	.000	29	34
West						
San Francisco	1	0	0	1.000	32	19
Seattle	1	0	0	1.000	26	20
Arizona	0	1	0	.000	28	34
L.A. Rams	0	1	0	.000	20	26

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



**Cook scores
3 TDs to help
Bills rout
Dolphins, 31-10**

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Saipan Tribune Sports

**Sources:
Cavaliers,
Okoro agree
to 3-year,
\$38M deal**

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16 MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2024

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Padonia bags bronze in Guam bodybuilding comp

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Fairly new CNMI resident Florencio Padonia flexed and bagged bronze in the open physique category of the Inaugural World Natural Bodybuilding Federation Guam's first Fitness Expo and premier bodybuilding show last Saturday at the University of Guam Field House.

Padonia, who was the overall champ of the men's physique division and first place in the men's physique short division of the 2024 Dee Clayton

Classic & Northern Marianas Bodybuilding and Physique Federation competition on Saipan last June, wowed the

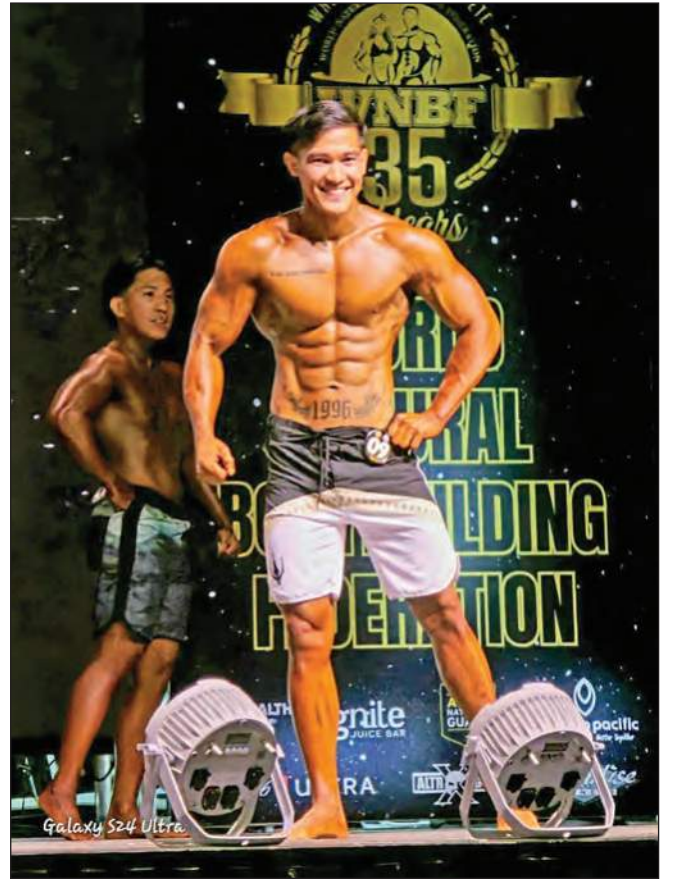
judges in Guam too, as he placed third out of seven other bodybuilders. The 27-year-old also placed

fifth out of seven in the men's physique medium class. Padonia is no stranger to See PADONIA on Page 15



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Florencio Padonia, right, shows off his bronze medal in the open physique category of the Inaugural World Natural Bodybuilding Federation Guam's first Fitness Expo and premier bodybuilding show last Saturday at the University of Guam Field House.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Florencio Padonia poses during the Inaugural World Natural Bodybuilding Federation Guam's first Fitness Expo and premier bodybuilding show last Saturday at the University of Guam Field House.

NMI team for Asia Pacific x-country champs set

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The CNMI's high school cross country team roster is set for the 2024 Asia Pacific Invitational Cross Country Championships this Oct. 20-22 in Chiba, Japan.

The runners are from five Saipan high schools and are competing against other high school student-athletes around the Asia-Pacific region, from host country Japan, as well as Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Palau, Hong Kong, and Guam.

There will be about 34 teams with about 400 high school runners—the largest numbers the championships have had, according to Dr. Ron Snyder, the CNMI's cross country team coach.

In the event, they will race twice—a traditional 5K course and then a relay where boys and girls will race together in 2.5K segments.

The Saipan runners were chosen based on their performance in the past two PSS/NMA All Schools Cross-Country 2024-2025



LEIGH GASES

High school division cross-country runners at the starting line of the second PSS/NMA All Schools Cross-Country 2024-2025 qualifier of the Run Saipan Invitational at the American Memorial Park.

qualifiers at the CPA Airport Field and the Run Saipan Invitational at the American Memorial Park.

The boys team include Victor Nash Santos (Saipan International School), Takeru Jim (Marianas High School), Jireh Wang (Agape Christian School), Michael Miller (Marianas High School), James Fan (ACS), Raffy Cai (ACS), Simon Tang (Saipan Southern High School), Landen Taflinger (Saipan International School), Samuel Zhu (ACS), and

Steve Yang (ACS), and alternatives Joseph Yang (ACS), Benny Li (ACS), Frank Lumanlan (MHS), Victor Neil Santos (SIS), and Junseo Kim (SIS).

The girls team is made up of Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez (SIS), Addalee Taflinger (SIS), Sablina Shen (ACS), Aubrey White (SIS), Lucy Hong (ACS), Mary Zhu (ACS), Julie Chavez (SIS), Catherine Pan (MHS), Jian Chun (MHS), Joanna Zhang (ACS), and alternates Jessica Chen (ACS), Joyce

See NMI on Page 15

HMS teams start strong in boys caging



LEIGH GASES

Hopwood Middle School Hilitais varsity basketball player Leon Galarse sets up the play as he runs down the court during their opener against Chacha Ocean View Middle School in the IT&E Interscholastic Boys Middle School Basketball League 2024-2025 at the Marianas High School Gymnasium last Friday.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



IT&E Interscholastic Boys Middle School Basketball League 2024-2025 season strong with a win each last Friday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Their young varsity team are the defending champions and they pulled through with a

win over Cha Cha Ocean View Middle School Lancherus, 36-12, to start off their campaign this season.

After some back and forth, the Hilitais drew first blood from a fastbreak play by Steven Tudela. The Lancherus replied with consecutive shots by Payton Pangelinan they stagnated there as Hilitais' defense tightened.

HMS' Zuriel Abejo and Josh Lizama then put them up, 9-4, with a few minutes left in the first half. Their lead skyrocketed from there as the

Lancherus stagnated, 4-15, before a time out. Then, HMS enjoyed a 12-point cushion, 21-9, at the end of the first half, thanks to their quick plays and more accurate takes at the basket.

The Lancherus were not as quick on their feet as the Hilitais got the better of them, and they were quickly silenced in the last half. The Lancherus went on to score just three more points off of visits to the free throw line, while the Hilitais went to town with Abejo and Johnli Taguiam taking the lead.

Taguiam led with 9 points while Abejo scored 6. Pangelinan scored the most at 5 for COVMS.

For the junior varsity team that played earlier, they won over COVMS' junior varsity team, 25-10.

It was a close game at the end of the first half, 5-2 in favor of the Hilitais, but they sprang into action in the last half and won by a margin of 15 points.

Eric Palacios, HMS varsity head coach, said after their game that this season they're defending their title with a much younger team than See HMS on Page 15